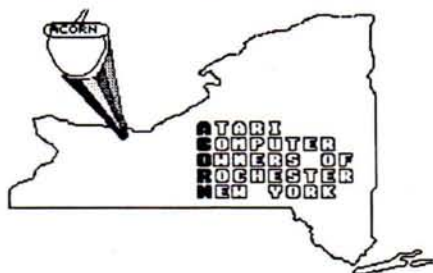


THE ACORN KERNEL

Volume #6, Issue #12

December 1987

\$2.00



Atari Computer Owners of Rochester, New York
(A.C.O.R.N.)

P. O. Box 23676
Rochester N.Y. 14692-0676

DECEMBER - 1987

MEETING:

Wednesday December 9, 1987

TIME:

7:30 p.m. General meeting

LOCATION:

Brighton High School
Room 314N

SIG ACTIVITIES:

Basically Speaking 7:00 - 7:30 p.m.
Room 314N

ST Programming SIG 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.
Room 262S

EXECUTIVE MEETING:

December 16, 1987, 7:30 p.m.
at Kathy Scoville's house,
28 Mertensia Lane., Henrietta

DEADLINE FOR KERNEL :
December 15, 1987

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TIME TO RENEW

**THIS IS YOUR LAST ISSUE OF THE
KERNEL UNLESS YOU RENEW 1988
MEMBERSHIP NOW!**

Please fill out the membership renewal form on the
back cover of this Kernel and either:

1. Mail it and a check of \$18 to our Post Office Box

or

2. Place the renewal form and check or exact amount of
cash (\$18) in an envelope give it to the Treasurer, Scott
Reeder at the November meeting.

THE ACORN KERNEL
Atari Computer Owners of Rochester N.Y.

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|--------------------|---------------|-------------------|
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Queries should be directed to David Cox at 328-5211 or send copy and line art ready for paste-up directly to the ACORN KERNEL, P. O. BOX 23676, ROCHESTER N.Y. 14692-0676 to arrive no later than the 15th of each month prior to publication. All advertising must be prepaid. We reserve the right to refuse any advertising not in keeping with ACORN's policies.

Non-commercial ads are accepted without charge from members and are limited to a maximum of four lines of text.

Articles on disk can be mailed to the Editor, 120 Cobblestone Dr. Rochester, NY 14623.

THE PREZ SEZ
By Kathy Scoville

I hope you are receiving this newsletter before December 5th. In that case, don't forget **Robert Collister's Magical Midi Music Concert** at 8:00 PM Saturday at the Brighton HS Auditorium. If the newsletter arrives AFTER the concert, didn't it just knock your socks off!! I can't thank Robert enough for putting on this extravaganza for us. I sincerely hope we can convince Robert to make this a yearly event.

The holidays are almost upon us. Are you ready? Although I'm writing this before the November General Meeting, I know what MY answer is already, "Of course not! Why should this year be any different!" I run around like a chicken (or should I say Turkey) with its head cut off every year. I always manage to finish up in time though. I miss the days when I could put sooty foot prints on the rug in front of the fireplace convincing the boys that Santa had forgotten to wipe his feet and "Boy, is HE going to be in trouble when Mommy sees that!"

Since there are sure to be lots of computers given as gifts this Holiday Season, this is a very good time to recommend ATARI computers to your friends. And if they say, "What about software?" You casually mention that **ACORN's 3rd Annual Disk Swap** is on January 13th and that means all the software they'll want for only \$1.00/single-sided disk! Be sure you mention the fact that a lot of the software in our libraries is of commercial quality. Such a deal! All they have to do is become a member of the greatest Atari users' group in New York State. (At least that's MY humble and totally unbiased opinion!) <GRIN>

That brings us up the Disk Swap. We'll need more machines than ever. We copied an amazing amount of software last year, but there were still a few people who didn't get quite all they wanted. I hope we can avoid that from happening this year, so begin considering what hardware you can bring in to help us out this year. The more machines we have, the more we can copy. (Of course, we can be very grateful to those who bring in hardware.) The Disk Swap will be held in the large Cafeteria, so we'll have nice large flat surfaces to put our equipment on. For those of you who were afraid to bring machines in because of possible damage to them, we are insured this time around. Isn't that nice to know? For the 8-bitters, we'll be looking in particular for 130XE's, but we'll gladly accept any hardware (Don't forget to bring extension cords and power strips.) We'll also need runners (go-fers). Let's make this the Swap of all Swaps!

Writing about the Disk Swap brings up another item... Have you renewed your ACORN membership yet? Sooner is better than later, because then the poor Treasurer doesn't have to worry about collecting membership dues and money for the Disk Swap at the same time. The Disk Swap is, of course, a member-only activity. Give the Treasurer a break... RENEW NOW!

Once again, our friend "The Survey" is in this issue of *The Kernel*. Please take the time to fill it out and turn it in to one of the officers. If you can't bring it with you to a meeting, please slip it in an envelope and mail it to us. Last year's survey was a real eye-opener, and the officers and directors have noted and tried to respond to your concerns. This is one of the easiest and most anonymous ways to let us know how things are doing. Won't you please tell us?

December's General Meeting will be held in Room 262S instead of 314N and the ST Sig and ST Programmer's Sig will be held in the Faculty Cafeteria. Another group has a commitment prior to ours for 314N. This will be for the December meeting only. All meetings AFTER the Annual Disk Swap will take place in our usual rooms.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL OF YOU!!!

MAGIC SAC

By Jack Scoville

Excerpted from *SQUEEZINGS*,
Courtesy of The CIDER Press, November 1987

As many of you may know, I live with an equally enthusiastic Atari person. She is so hooked that she is the President of ACORN, the local Atari Users Group. Since Kathy was such a good troop to put up with my taking one day of our vacation to attend the MacExpo in Boston in August, I felt that turn about is fair play. So I accompanied Kathy to the Northeast Atari bash sponsored by the Boston Computer Society (Oct. 9-11th) held in Worcester, Mass.

I know, I know. What does this have to do with Macintosh? Well I had my eyes opened by a demonstration of the *Magic Sac*. For those not familiar with the *Magic Sac*, it is a plug-in cartridge, produced by Data Pacific, that sells for \$149 without the 64K Apple ROMs or about \$250 with the cost of the 64K ROMs that makes an Atari ST run Macintosh software! Now I know most of you may have heard that it had limited success in running Mac software particularly copy protected software. Well it ain't any more. A beta version of "The Translator" was shown which allows the ST drives to behave like a Macintosh drive. The tentative price for *The Translator* is \$199.

Why should this be of any interest to a Mac user? Well for those who would like to upgrade to a Mac Plus or an SE, or would like to have a machine at home that is compatible with the one at the office, or for use by a start-up company who needs an inexpensive Mac clone, this is the ticket! I saw a 1040ST with The Translator box running *MacProject* on the Atari black and white monitor. The latest *Magic Sac* software version 4.5 will also support a hard disk. With a hard disk you will be able to boot the entire system up to the Mac desktop in 5 seconds flat! Other goodies being prepared for release is a routine that will warn you that you have a bad Finder and a utility to transfer files between TOS and Magic formatted disks in either direction. Word has it that when *The Translator* is shipped it will have software version 5.0 which will support the HFS file management system. NEAT STUFF! Well, by now you are saying to yourselves, "Yah, but it is limited to running only applications compatible with the old 64K ROMs - WRONG!"

Remember the HD-20 that we all used to patch around the 64K ROMs? Well, it works the same way on this rig. Put the HD-20 in the system folder and Voila! HFS on 64K ROMs, 800K disk drives on 64K ROMs, and hard disk support. So, what is this thing going to cost me? Well a 1 Meg. 1040ST with high resolution 12 inch black and white monitor, with one built-in 800K drive, can be obtained by mail order for approximately \$700. Add in the cost of a *Magic Sac* and *The Translator* for \$400 and we have invested \$1,100. Now add a 20 Meg. hard disk for less than \$600. Consider that Apple set the video interlace speed on

a SE to about 8 MHZ making it as fast as an ST. I hate to admit it folks, but if it looks like an ST, but acts like an SE and smells like an SE, and with the benefit of a larger screen, who am I to argue with success?! With a hard disk hooked up to this Sac-inized ST, we have in essence, if not in fact, a Mac SE for well under \$2,000! With the difference in cost one could invest in some very powerful Mac Software.

It may be time "For the Rest of Us" to seek alternatives to obtaining the "Power Without the Price."

SOFTWARE REVIEW: THE CRIMSON CROWN

By Chris Freemesser, ACORN

Well, Christmas is upon us once again, and if you are like me, you have ALOT of shopping to do. And if you are like me, you have roughly \$1.29 left in the bank account. You just want to get someone a nice game for their computer, but you don't have the \$40 to get one. Here I am to uphold your good name with a review of *The Crimson Crown*. *The Crimson Crown* is the sequel to the Penguin Software classic *Transylvania*.

The story begins in Wallachia, a mythical kingdom. You are Mikhail, His Majesty King John's loyal chamberlain. The Vampyr, who was supposedly destroyed in *Transylvania*, has come back to life. He drains the life force out of King John, eventually killing him. The entire kingdom of Wallachia falls into the power of the Vampyr, and it is up to you, Prince Erik, and Princess Sabrina to find the missing *Crimson Crown*, which gives the kingdom its prosperity. Also, the Vampyr must be destroyed once and for all.

Now onto the game itself. The graphics are in low resolution, which took me by suprise. I had hoped some really great medium resolution graphics were in store. The graphics themselves were not all that great, but passable. Many of the scenes used in *Transylvania* were used here also. I found that to my advantage (having played *Transylvania*), but it will not hinder those who have not played it.

The game has some problems and riddles to solve, all of which are not too difficult. Be sure to draw yourself some maps when playing this game, for there are MANY different scenes. Also, keep an eye on the screen at ALL times! The Vampyr often whisks you away to another part of Wallachia in a matter of seconds.

And now onto packaging. I was totally suprised with what I got in my box. First (and I guess formost) was the program disk, which I was able to back up with no problems. Also, you get a small booklet telling about the events leading up to the adventure. If that were not enough, you get a parchment with three riddles on it (part of the game), a parchment map of Wallachia (which I have not needed to use in the game), a general booklet telling about Polarware's "COMPREHEND" series of interactive novels (of which *The Crimson Crown* is a part), a poster of the game (like you might see in a computer store), and a newsletter telling about Polarware's software!

Now you might not seem too thrilled about the game, and you are still wondering why I mentioned that \$1.29 in my bank account. Well, *Polarware* has decided that selling many copies at low prices is better than selling fewer

copies at high prices. The retail price for *The Crimson Crown* is a scant \$19.95! Better yet, I paid \$14.95 for the game through Mr. Bellucco!

In conclusion, I say one thing. GET THIS GAME! It's a pretty competent graphic adventure with lots of goodies, and the price is unbeatable. At \$40 it's not worth it, but with a price of \$15-\$20, it's a steal. But you better call TOM pretty fast if you want this game! You only have a couple of weeks left! *The Crimson Crown* by Polarware is for the 520/1040 ST with color monitor. Retail price is \$19.95 (who the heck pays retail?), but you can get it for \$14.95 if you know where to look. Oh yea, Merry Christmas folks!

BASICALLY SPEAKING

By Jeff Summers, ACORN

Curses! Well, cursor, actually. That's the topic of this month's column. Control of the cursor can be simple, or it may be as difficult as you wish to make it for your application.

The cursor is that small white box that tells you where the next character is going to be printed. If you use the screen editor entirely for your input and output, you will have little or no problem in manipulating the cursor. Basically, you need only use the PRINT command (with spaces or special characters for moving the cursor in different directions), the INPUT command, and the POSITION command. PRINT and INPUT have been well covered in other articles. The POSITION command has the format:

POSITION X,Y

where X is the column to which you want the cursor moved, and Y is the row. All ATARI Basic commands that use a column and row use them in that order. Try this:

```
10 X=RND(0)*39
20 Y=RND(0)*23
30 POSITION X,Y
40 GOTO 10
```

What this looks like it will do is move the cursor, using the position statement, to a set of random coordinates, then to another set of coordinates, and so on. If you ran the program, however, you would see that the cursor just sits there and doesn't move. Why?

After a POSITION statement, the cursor only moves after the next PRINT or INPUT statement (or any other statement that would result in a character being placed on the screen). So, changing the position of the cursor by the POSITION statement does nothing until you actually print. This is a recurring theme with cursor commands - nothing changes until you print. So, a "do nothing" print statement will need to be added to our program to get the cursor to actually move around. Try adding this line:

```
35 PRINT CHR$(30);CHR$(31);
```

This statement moves the cursor one space to the left, then one space to the right (equivalent to printing the left arrow key then the right arrow key, but that won't reproduce in the newsletter). Now, the cursor will move

around the screen as desired.

So, now what if you want to make the cursor disappear? Location 752 is called CRSINH in Ian Chadwick's *Mapping the ATARI*, and it controls whether the cursor is visible or not. Thus, if you have placed a menu on the screen and want single character entry without the character being shown on the screen or the cursor being visible, you would POKE this location with any number other than zero. The cursor will stay visible until you print (again), so put a line like line 35 above in your program right after the POKE to turn the cursor off. If you then don't want the character printed on the screen, use the "K:" device, getting the characters from the keyboard instead of the screen.

This brings us to the subject of writing specific input routines. The screen editor is useful for most purposes, but there are times that you don't want the user to be able to clear the screen, use control characters, etc. Perhaps you only want numbers to be allowed and want all other characters ignored. You need to take control from the screen editor to do this, and here's an example of how it is done.

```
100 REM INPUT NUMBER ONLY
110 OPEN #5,4,0,"K:"
120 LPOS=1:RESULT$=""
130 GET #5,X
140 IF X=155 THEN 200
150 IF X<46 OR X>57 OR X=47 THEN 130
160 RESULT$(LPOS,LPOS)=CHR$(X)
170 LPOS=LPOS+1
180 PRINT CHR$(X);:GOTO 130
200 REM USER TYPED RETURN
210 RESULT=VAL(RESULT$)
220 CLOSE #5
230 RETURN
```

This is a subroutine that could be called by a program anytime that a number was needed for input. Note that the main program must include a DIM statement for the string RESULT\$. It allows only numbers and the decimal point to be entered. The only error that would occur is if the person entered two decimal points, or if a decimal point were the only thing entered. Checks for these could be added, as could a line that took care of the DELETE key (characters inputted with this routine cannot be erased), but for example purposes I wanted to keep things simple. Line 100 reminds us what the routine is to do. Line 110 opens the keyboard for input. Line 120 initializes a few variables we will be using. Line 130 gets the characters as typed from the keyboard, and lines 140 and 150 check to see if the character should be accepted. If not, you loop back to get another character. If so, then the character is added to the array RESULT\$, LPOS (the current logical position in the RESULT\$ array) is incremented, the character is printed to the screen, and you are returned to get another character. Only accepted characters are thus printed to the screen. When the user types RETURN, the result is calculated at line 210 and the keyboard channel is closed.

DAISY-DOT: A NEAR LETTER QUALITY DRIVER

by Nicholas J. Cup, ACORN
ACORN Disk H16

Have I got good news for those of you who own a XL/XE & an Epson/Star compatible printer! It's name is **DAISY-DOT**.

And what is this **DAISY-DOT**. It's a program that was written in **Turbo Basic** and has been compiled. Hence the reason for owning XL/XE. (TURBO BASIC is not needed with this program). This program takes text files that you have printed to disk and prints them in a graphics mode on your printer to create a NEAR LETTER QUALITY print out.

The Disk also contains 7 NLQ fonts: Roman, Script, Old English, Old West, San-Serif, Ohio, Block, & Russian. If you don't like these, there is a font editor built into the program that works very well. On this disk you will also find a program called FCONVRT.OBJ which will convert a standard Atari font over to a DAISY-DOT font.

To use FCONVRT.OBJ you must boot up DOS from another disk. This is because **DAISY-DOT** is an AUTORUN file, and I didn't put DUP.SYS on this disk. This gave me more room for all the files and fonts.

Keep in mind this program does a close approximation of the font. You then can go in and fine tune it with the DAISY-DOT editor. By the way, your characters can be as big as 16x16 square. As you can see, that's a lot of info for character.

I think that you will like this program. It does one heck of a good job.



THE 8-BIT LIBRARY

By Nicholas J. Cup

I hope that everyone is getting ready for the end of the year, its almost here. And with the beginning of the New Year just around the corner, its time once again to get ready for the ANNUAL DISK SWAP. As I said last month, I would have more info for you on how things will be done. I'll get to them in just a second, but first on to some goodies.

First, you should all know that we (the ACORN 8-BIT LIBRARY) have broken the "2 Hundred" Disk side mark. The actual number as of this writing is a WHOPPING 214. Now keep in mind the last disk of each category may not be full. But also be aware that there are only 16 categories. That is a lot of bytes.

Now just for fun, there are 88,375 bytes available in single density on one disk side, which is 707 free sectors x 125, (each sector without link bytes is 125 bytes long). $88,375 \times 214 = 18,912,250$ bytes. A lot of bytes, right? DOS, the DISK MENU PROGRAM, and the AUTORUN.SYS take up 90 sectors. So $90 \times 125 = 11,250$ bytes used to boot most library disks. So $11,250 \times 214 = 2,407,500$ bytes in the

library that are repeated and not really new. SO $18,912,250 - 2,407,500 = 16,504,750$ bytes that you can choose from.

In fact there are disks in the library that do not use the DISK MENU PROGRAM, and the ACTION! & M/L SOURCE CODE disks don't even have DOS on them. So as you can see, you have close to 17 Million bytes in your Library.

Now some bytes are better than others. Here are some that I would recommend that you try to get during the disk swap. And this is not to say the others are bad, just in my opinion these should have a higher priority for one reason or another.

I think you should check out **A28** for *Dandy*. It is a great 1-4 player game. So good, we could have a Dandy tournament.

B09 has a *Wheel of Fortune* game that's great for the whole family, **RWB.BAS** on **B10** a sort of Rubic's Squares, and **B11-14** a trivia game.

D13-19 are good Movie maker or M/L demos. Some real good programs here.

Take a good look at the Home Utilities, especially **H11-12**. This is *TextPro V. 1.2*. It is a Very, VERY good P/D word processing program that I don't think you'll want to miss.

H13 is Icon Shop. It will give you much more creative power over making *Print Shop* Icons. There are many utilities on it to help you do many different things with our Icons. Also keep a look out for other Icon utilities. These other utilities let you use the Icons without having *Print Shop*. So try and get them. We have also added a new Icon disk about half full of miscellaneous Icons that I'm sure you will want.

Also in the Home Utilities section you will find a disk called *Daisy-Dot* that lets you print many different NEAR LETTER QUALITY fonts to your Epson/Star printers. It is GREAT!

And as I said these are just some of the goodies that you can get at the disk swap.

This brings me to, "where do I as a member come in"? Well, last year we copied a lot of disks. We also had a lot more to do when 10 O'clock rolled around, (that's when we have to stop). This year we have more disks than ever, and I hope, more members. This should tell you that you may walk away with even less that you did last year.

There is a way around this problem. And that put simply is to have as many 130XE computer systems there copying the disks that you want. I am asking everyone that can, bring in something to try to help. A TV, computer, drive, cords, yourself. Anything to get as many systems as possible. I don't think that it's right that the same people do all the work all the time. But it is up to you. The less systems that we have, the less you will all be able to get. So just think about it.

Now to some of the rules.

There are a few things that you should know. THIS IS FOR MEMBERS ONLY!!! You may renew your

membership at this meeting.

1. You will be charged \$1.00 per disk side. (One side of one disk).

2. YOU MUST BE A MEMBER!!! (Did I say that already?)

3. Disks are copied first come first served.

4. Disk swap copying will ONLY be done during this meeting. Disks not copied will be returned free of charge.

5. You may "try" to get as many copies as you would like.

6. Each disk MUST be FORMATTED 2.0 SINGLE DENSITY, NOT 2.5 ENHANCED or DOUBLE DENSITY! (Any question on how to format a disk call me).

7. Use only ONE disk side per disk. PERIOD! (This cuts down on some confusion. This also means that if you want a disk that needs two sides like *TextPro*, or *Turbo Basic*, you must use TWO disks).

8. On that side of THAT disk (NOT the jacket), place a label with the disk number you want. I.E. H05 on the TOP RIGHT CORNER of the label in BIG print. Place your name in the BOTTOM LEFT CORNER. PLEASE PRINT!

Disks will be collected during the meeting and sorted in piles according to disk number. The copying will then start. As disks are copied, they will be taken to our Treasurer for distribution. He will be collecting your \$1.00 Dollar per disk and if need be, your dues also. If you must leave early for whatever reason, contact me and we will track down your disks. You will only be charged for the disks that have been completed. The same rule applies at the end of the meeting. We hope that this will help take some of the confusion out of the disk swap and at the same time allow for as many copies to be made as possible.

Disk of the Month

This month's disk of the month will be a special collection of some of the best programs available in the library. I hope you enjoy them.

Have a Very Merry Christmas.

8-BIT LIBRARY FAVORITES

by Jeff Kyle, ACORN

With the quick approach of the Annual Disk Copy, some of you may be wondering which disks to choose this year. To help, I have taken some of the best programs in the library and listed them out for you by category and disk number. I'll try to make this list as comprehensive as possible, but due to the sheer number of programs, the comments will usually be fairly short. I hope this list will come in handy for choosing which disks to get.

Arcade Games:

A02 GAMBLER .BAS probably more games of chance than you'll find anywhere else combined.

A05 AVALANCH.OBJ nice Q*Bert clone from *Analog*.

A06 ESCAPE .BAS *Escape from Epsilon* from *Antic* magazine. Pretty nice multiscreen game. GRUBS .BAS OK Apple Panic clone.

A09 LIVEWIRE.OBJ Another arcade clone from *Analog*. Very much like *Tempest*.

A11 GAUNTLET.OBJ Hopefully everyone already has this-but just in case...this is a very good 50-screen shoot-em-up. SYNTRON .OBJ *Robotron* clone from *Analog*.

Very fast-paced.

A13 RISKYRES.BAS A nice 3-screen game from *Antic* by the author of *Escape from Epsilon*.

A14 MRM .OBJ This is a nice, multi-screen gobble-game with minimal mazes. Interesting in that you must touch the toilet when you've gorged yourself or DIE Sheesh!

A15 OUTPOST .OBJ Frustrating UFO maze game. But pretty nice.

A17 CDEFENDR.OBJ A fun shoot-em-up again from *Analog*.

A18 KINGCAS .BAS Very frustrating running game! AIRHOCKY.OBJ Fun 2-player pong-type game. Includes Action! source code.

A19 ACROBAT .BAS Fun running game from the pages of *Compute!*.

A20 BLAST .OBJ Another fun shoot-em-up from *Analog*.

A25 AMAZMAZE.EXE For those of you who like 3-D maze games, this is the best.

A26 FORTUNE .BAS A nice *Wheel of Fortune* game from *Analog*. KRAZYKAT.OBJ Interesting variation of the Centipede theme. RAMBUGII.OBJ Very fun "debugging" game.

BRAIN GAMES

B04 TRICKY .OBJ Strange game where you get tiles together to form a track to let your train get from one corner to another.

B09 WORDFUN .BAS Fun with Words from *Antic*. A big *Wheel of Fortune* clone with LOTS of puzzle data.

Demonstrations

D01 JANEGAME.OBJ Fun block-dropping demo.

D03 BALLSONG.OBJ A neat music/graphics demo with a musical ball.

D04 APPLKILL.BAS *The Death of an Apple*. Title tells all. ATARICES.OBJ Incredible robot/rocket demo. PASSION .OBJ Great music demo with words! This is also on M20.

D07 LUCAS .OBJ Nice graphics demo from Lucasfilm. Very complex! D08 FUJIDEMO.OBJ Famous bouncing Fuji. Very well done.

Education: whatever you need.

Home Utilities

H02 SPEEDSCR.OBJ *SpeedScript* from *Compute!*. You sorta need the mag to fully use it, though.

H08 DBASE .OBJ Nice little database from *Analog*. SPELLER .OBJ Nice spelling checker from *Analog*. Need a translator for XL/XEs.

H11 *TextPro 1.2* Big word processor. I haven't used this much but then I don't have the DOCs!

Languages/DOSs

L09 MachDOS 3.7 Unusual DOS with many features. Unusual in that instead of a DOS and DUP, there is only MACHDOS.SYS!

L11 Turbo Basic GET THIS DISK if you don't have it yet. Put this on your Basic disks for some real speed! Or try out the compiler! This is for XL/XEs only.

L12 TBasic DOCs If you have a few old Kernel's, I believe all the info on this disk was printed in an old issue. But maybe not ALL. Get it just in case.

L13 Grip Assemb. Unusual assembler. Since I don't do ML, I don't use it, but you may find it useful.

MUSIC

M02 CANTINA Very good Star Wars Cantina Band music.

M04 PETEGUNN.AM2 *Peter Gunn* theme, AKA Spy Hunter theme.

M08 HALOWEEN.AM2 Halloween movie theme. Very good rendition.

M12 SAFETY .AM2 Nice long version of *Safety Dance*.

M16 BACKNTIM.AM2 From (ugh) *Back to the Future*. Sounds pretty good, even though I put it in. Some others I did are BACKFUTR, GREASE, HITCHCOK, ONESTEP, TWIZONE, & WALKLIFE on the same disk.

M17 ERTHANGL.AM2 *Earth Angel*, another one of mine tha turned out well. **MONTPTYH.AM2** Nice Liberty Bell song.

M18 DOWNUNDR.AM2 Nice transcription.

M19 all of 'em! Very good songs from David Eichel.

M20 AMP Music #1 VERY nice music with words. This has some of the best songs you'll ever hear from a computer.

PICTURES

P02 ALIEN .PIC Prize-winning picture of "Alien"'s nastie.

P05 GOLDFISH.PIC Nice Far Side pic.

P08 This is for Star Trek & SciFi fans. Includes many MicroSIS pictures (b/w Star Trek pics) and a few other sci-fis.

SIMULATIONS

Q06 ARABIAN .BAS Arabian Adventure from *SoftSide Adventures*. All of the *SoftSides* are well-done. **ATLANTIS.BAS** Another *SoftSide* adv.

Q08 MADHOUSE.BAS Another *SoftSide* adventure.

SPECIAL APPLICATIONS - get whatever looks good as have NOTHING on any of these disks. (wonder how that happened?)

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

T07 AMIS .BAS Run your own BBS! FoReM BBS Another BBS program.

T09 MPPEXP .EXE MPP Express! The best MPP term software.

T10 EXPRS850.COM 850 Express! The best 850 term software.

T11 ARC12X .EXE If you use a modem, you need this even though it stinks.

T12 EXPRESS3.EXE 1030 Express! The best 1030 term software.

UTILITIES

U03 BLKRABIT.BAS Creates a boot disk to copy a SD disk in two passes in 48K.

U08 COPYXE .OBJ 130XE 1-pass disk copier from Antic. The same one used for the Disk-of-the Month copying.

U12 CREATEA .BAS Create-a-Font from an old Analog. A nice charset editor. **FIXXL .OBJ** A good XL/XE translator.

U13 BASICOFF.OBJ Turn BASIC off from DOS on XL/XEs. **BASICON.OBJ** turns it on.

U20 TEDIT .COM Good text editor from Analog.

U21 BOOTMAKR.EXE Very nice "noDOS" menu maker for loading ML programs without loading DOS. **MULTCOPY.OBJ** VERY nice batch file copier from analog.

SPREADSHEETS - again, whatever you need.

TEXT FILES - Guess what? whatever you need!

ACTION! source code if you use Action!, you'd probably do good to get them all.

MACHINE LANGUAGE source code well, if you want source code for ML...

I hope this list helps you choose some disks to get. Now for a few that will hopefully be in the next update:

CAVELORD.OBJ English translation of a German import. Believe it or not, this is in compiled Basic! Really! Check out the credits at beginning of load. Another set of AMP songs that are worth getting as well as an AMP demo for *Antic* that incorporates character animation, too!

VIDBLITZ.OBJ If you've got a 130XE, you'll like this demo, although 500+ sectors IS a bit lengthy...

SPCDELVR.OBJ A new christmas game where YOU play Santa!

RLESHOW.OBJ and some RLE pictures. RLE pictures are in Graphics 8, and very hi-res. They look very good, and there are some that are ported from Amigas, STs, and Macs!

RDRAW, a nice 130XE graphics 8 drawing program.

DSKINDX3.OBJ the best disk indexer ever.

DISKASSM.OBJ a very nice SD/DD sector editor.

BBKARTST.OBJ Nice drawing program from *Analog*.

COPYMATE 4.3-a very nice disk copier. Can even copy a double density disk in ONE pass on expanded memory XEs!

SUPERKEY.OBJ A nice macro key maker from the author of the Express! term programs.

See you there!

AMODEM 7.5

Program by Trend Dudley
Reviewed by Chuck Grimsby
Courtesy of T.A.I.G. Newsletter, Sept/Oct. 1987

AModem 7.5, for those of you who don't know, is the official fixed version of Trent Dudley's *AModem 7.44* which had a few bugs, and which many people had "fixed" themselves with varying degrees of success. This time, Trent's done it right!

AModem 7.5 is truly a marvel in the telecommunications world. It works with all Disk Operating Systems, and hardware configurations, and it's a ShareWare Program! Of course, to get all that into one program would be almost insane to actually try to do, so this program comes with files that you put together yourself to make it truly compatible for your system. This also makes it a smaller program leaving more of your computer's memory free.

AModem 7.5 will also work with OSS's Basic XL/XE which will give you a bigger buffer in the EXTENDED mode. There's no real help in using the faster operating speed of Basic XL/XE, or even Turbo-Basic.

Don't worry about putting the files together, Trent has

also written an excellent set of documents to go with it, and all the instructions you'll ever need for this program are included in there. A help file is also displayed at Boot-up or by pressing ^H, so don't worry about forgetting what does what while you're on line.

Note: Throughout this article the "^" character stands for the Control key which is pressed together with another key to get the action or response desired.

AModem 7.5 is actually a two program set, both written in regular Atari Basic with a lot of machine language strings to help speed things up a bit.

The main program, *AMODEM75.BAS*, reads a file created by the second program, *AUTGEN75.BAS*. *AUTGEN75.BAS* creates the file for the autodialer function of *AMODEM75.BAS*. It also allows you to store your passwords for each BBS in a way that *AMODEM75.BAS* can read and send through your modem at the touch of a couple of keys (^ and P at the same time to be precise. You may consider that one key, if you like.)

AUTGEN75.BAS also allows you to make comments about each BBS that will also display from the Autodial menu. So if a BBS is only open during certain hours, you'll see those hours on the screen right next to the BBS's name. A feature Part-time BBS SysOps (& their families) are sure to love.

And speaking of time, *AMODEM75.BAS* also has two clocks that display both the time of day, and your connect time. Especially nice for those of us who use Pay BBS's such as *CompuServe*, *Delphi* & *GENie*.

The "Software Clock" in *AModem 7.5* will also support those of us who have the R-Time-8 Cart, or (if you don't have one) will work on it's own. Simply set the time at Boot-up, and away you go. The clock is fairly accurate too. I've personally hit the reset key, exited to DOS, done some file transfers, re-ran *AMODEM75.BAS*, and have found the clock to be still there, zipping up to the proper time from when I hit the reset key.

Taking a cue from the popular *BackTalk* program (from *ANTIC Publishing*), Trent's included the joystick in the program to send eight different characters through your modem. Y,N,^S and ^Q are there as well as ^N, ^X, ^P and <Return> when the fire button is pushed.

Both programs are written in Basic with some Machine Language strings thrown in for speed. This means for the most part that you are free to modify the programs as much as you want. Trent only asks that if you Upload the programs to any BBS you Upload the original UNMODIFIED programs so that the people who download can do their won modifying without first trying to figure out what you've done to it.

As I was saying, you are free to modify your own copy as much as you want, and in fact in the documents are quite a few references to where each line is and what each variable does. One of the first things I did was to change it so that it boots up in lower case, with word wrap on. (40 column BBS's are getting hard to find now-a-days, so that word wrap comes in handy!). There's also a place in the program for those of you who don't have the 1+ long distance dialing. Just change the string for long distance dialing to whatever your needs are (up to 20 characters) and away you go. Since I do a good deal of my

telecommunicating from where I work, I changed the long distance dialing code to "9-" so I can get an outside line from work with out a lot of hassle. The codes sent from the joystick are even changeable if you so desire.

Like I said before, the documents contain everything you need to know about what and where to change the program to make it fit your needs. Just remember to SAVE a copy to disk after you've made your changes.

There are ten 80 character Macros that can be programmed. This is a nice feature for sending those things out that you do so often. For instance, many BBS's first ask for your password and then for the last 4 of your phone number. Simple to put into a macro, since Trent Dudley also put into his macros the ability to read that file from the *AUTGEN.BAS* file. Just have the macro send the password, then the last four numbers of your phone. Just think. Two key-presses, one to dial the number and one to activate your macro, and you're online to your favorite BBS.

Personally, since I do a lot of long distance BBSing, I also added macros to send my first name, my last name, my city & state, and my full phone number. These seem to be the most commonly asked questions when first logging on to a new BBS. Once I'm a registered user on a BBS, I use the "send password, send last four of phone number" macro to log me on.

I've actually only found one "bug" in the program. It can't handle 7-bit boards without putting a little heart (which is an ASCII 'null') in front of every line. But since 7-bit boards are few (and getting fewer) this doesn't seem like too big a deal.

There are some things I would wish for in the program(s). Like for instance, I'd like to see a longer password allowed. Twenty digits would be nice. This way I could use the ^P function to send my *GENie* & *CompuServe* passwords to those systems.

I'd also like to be able to send more than just one character out via the joystick port. On a lot of BBS's, after pressing your selection you also have to press return. So a "command + return" option would be nice to have on the joystick.

However, the program, as it stands now, certainly is quickly becoming the current "Standard" for other programs to beat. And I have no qualms about it. In fact from the first time I used it I knew it would become the only program I would be using. And that's what has happened. (Sorry *ANTIC*, *BackTalk*'s been put in with the other program that I now no longer use.)

AIRBALL

An ST Game From Microdeal
Reviewed by Bill Estes, BRACE/STDIO

Courtesy of Puget Sound Atari News, October 1987

Microdeal is again giving us another new game to enjoy, and as usual, they are leading the way in great arcade games. *Microdeal* terms this an "Arcade Adventure Game", and an adventure game it is. You start out as a ball of air with a slow leak. You were turned into this 'Airball' by an evil Wizard and your spellbook that will help turn you back into a man. You must also find several

valuable objects that will help you, with the aid of the spellbook, to turn back into a man.

You will start the game on a air pump, be careful though, if you stay too long on the air pump, you will explode, losing one of the lives the evil Wizard has given you. There is a bar at the bottom of the screen that will let you know when the air pressure is getting too high or too low. Care must be taken not to be over filled or under filled. If you run out of air you will also lose a life. These are just a few of the easy ways to lose lives. Almost every room has at least one way to lose a life. There are spears, spikes, different surfaces that make you explode, pitfalls that either drop you onto a sharp object or into a pit that you cannot get out of. There are several air pumps throughout the mansion that will help you maintain your pressure. If you lose a life, you will be started over at the air pump you last were pumped up by. This at least will save you some tedium of going back to an area of the mansion that you were last in. As was mentioned before, there are over 150 rooms in the mansion, so explore the mansion, and find the spellbook and the other objects that will turn you back to human form.

The graphics in *Airball* are great to look at and the different rooms are many and varied with different looks to all of them. You will find some rooms that when you enter them you will find a black screen. These rooms require a light source of some kind, so find the flashlight and hit the space bar to pick up the flashlight or other object that you want to carry. The only problem with trying to carry objects is that you can only carry one object at a time (hint, hint). For those of you that like text adventures, this may be a game that you could also enjoy. While there are no typing of text and asking of questions, you will use your problem solving skills to find the various objects and spellbook to complete your quest.

One of my few complaints with this game is that *Airball* is heavily copy protected and there is no way to save the game after you have worked your way through the maze of rooms looking for various objects... And being tired, you would like to stop playing and save your position and start over at that point later without having to spend a lot of time finding all the objects and traveling through all those rooms again. My next complaint is a minor one. There is a hall of fame, but it is only of use while you are playing the game and after you turn your computer off your high scores are not saved for the next time that you want to show off to someone or want to see what the highest score earned was.

The movement from room to room is smooth but not without problems. Each room is set up on a diagonal, perspective look that gives the appearance of three dimensions. Using your joystick to control your form of the airball is difficult to adapt to. You can either roll or hit the fire button to bounce your way from one place to another, and this will take your way from one place to another, and this will take some getting used to. I have had the game several weeks now and have found the spellbook and several of the objects needed to finish this exciting and entertaining game.

Microdeal has again furnished us with a real winner. Edward Scio is the creator of *Airball*, graphics by Pete Lyon, Music by Pete Shields and Rooms by Peter Scott... and I am happy to thank them for creating one of the best games now in my collection. The price is regularly \$39.95... if you haven't seen or bought this game yet, then don't

delay! Get your copy while you can, this game won't stay on the shelves long!

INTERVIEW WITH RON KOVAKS

from ZMAG

uploaded to Atari Apex BBS by Chuck Leazott, HDUG

MRZ: Hi Ron. Welcome aboard!

RON: Hi Chuck. Happy to help.

MRZ: Super. Here's yer chance to tell us all about ZMAG.

RON: Which one?

MRZ: There's more than one? Tells you how much I get around!

RON: Yes, there are really 2 ZMAG's. There is one still being done in Chicago, while ours is from New Jersey. It started out there, and they were doing it for the CLAAUG User Group. They wanted to have something for their User Group so that when they went to these meetings, this monitor would be displaying this Atari/User Group information.

MRZ: How does one distinguish one from the other? Don't folks get confused?

RON: No really, because basically the Chicago ZMAG stays in Chicago. I'm the person that put ZMAG all over the rest of the country, and I continue it that way.

MRZ: You send it to other BBS's?

RON: To all the other boards that are carrying it, yes. Once a week.

MRZ: You send it to them, or they call you to get it?

RON: Well, when we first started it we only had 3 boards in New Jersey carrying ZMAG. We started uploading to CompuServe, and I was also publishing the Chicago ZMAG.

The Chicago ZMAG seems to want to stay local, but whether that's official or not I don't know. Clinton Smith is currently publishing that now.

He sent me information on how to do it, and I was just going to do a local edition out of New Jersey hoping that other people would decide to do it for every state, but it never progressed that far.

MRZ: So you started doing them yourself. What happened after that?

RON: Well, I was still sending them to Chicago, and I just got tired of it because it wasn't progressing enough for me. If you're going to spend the time to do something, you should make it so everyone can get it.

MRZ: So, who started helping you?

RON: Nobody really helped me, but others were getting interested, so we started a board in New York City. Then, when we started going on CompuServe and Genie, that's when people started getting interested.

It had only started getting popular in the last 3 months or so.

MRZ: 3 months?

RON: It has been around for a long time, but I think a lot of people thought it was going to die off. I would say this year, in the last 3 or 4 months, it has been about the best.

MRZ: So you have all the issues of ZMAG on your BBS now, correct?

RON: Yes, all of them. We're running a Hard Disk now, so there's room.

MRZ: What kind of Hard Drive do you have?

RON: It's a Supra 10 Meg. It just came out last year. I don't have an MIO yet, so that's why I stay with what I have.

MRZ: Ok, so where do you get your ZMAG information

from?

RON: Wow...so many places. *CompuServe*, *Delphi*, *Genie*, *Atari's Bulletin Board* and all different places. We have to be careful of what we print from these folks. Also, other BBS's, and reading magazines and such.

I corrolate news and such. See, the problem that we're having now, that we've never had before, is we've gotten to the point of popularity.

Now we're being scrutinized by numerous magazines and such (names left out to protect the innocent) in particular.

See I was under the impression that news was news. I didn't think you could copyright news. So now, when I see an article, I have to be careful.

I recently went through a -thing- with a name brand magazine, but that's all been taken care of. You really have to watch what you print. Some news items seem to be the exclusive rights of these folks.

Then the news is placed on a Large BBS, and becomes available for download by anyone. But, you still can't reprint it without permission of that source..

It has gotten to the point...I can't say that I've thought about giving *ZMAG* up..., but it just seems that every week there's another hassle of one type or another.

MRZ: Hey! You're a star now, man! You have to be careful!

RON: (A Short Bilabial Fricative)

MRZ: Hehehehe...How am I supposed to print that?

RON: Heheh...I don't know...good luck.

At any rate, it's nice for the Magazine to be popular, and I'm kinda impressed by the way it has taken off. It took a year or so of continuing to do it week after week.

I have people who help me for a month and then drop out, but I'm determined to keep it going, and just like I wrote in a comentary that I've uploaded to different places, no matter how much trouble people make I'm going to continue. I'm not making any money off of it, so...

MRZ: Then why do it? (rotten question.)

RON: I don't know why. I kinda ask myself that continually. Why do I do it? It's interesting. I kinda keep up on everything.

My basic interest is User Groups. I think User Groups don't get enough credit. I go to a User Group meeting every once in a while, and I sit there for my 3 or 4 hours and I walk out annoyed.

MRZ: ?

RON: Because I hear news that people heard 3 or 4 months ago, or they'll show a demo of something, and I've seen it a long time ago.

MRZ: Well, you get that in all the magazines and such.

RON: Yeah, it's the same thing. Old news. I think that we're not stupid people, and whether or not they want to acknowledge that we want to hear current stuff or not...

A good example now, is *Analog Magazine*. Instead of staying with a monthly, they're going to a July/August September/October type of format.

MRZ: Maybe that's why the other folks are having problems with *ZMAG*. You come out with all the current news before anyone else does!?

RON: Yes, but I have been accused (no names mentioned) of causing their subscription count to dwindle because of it, which isn't fair, but...I supply news basically. I'm not supplying advertising in 80 or so pages of information.

See, I have enough information to do, for example, 4-5 *ZMAG*'s right now. So I can sit here and decide what I'm going to publish. There's a lot of research to see where the information came from.

I got into a bit of trouble recently, and I do want to

talk about that in one extent, where I haven't published some recent E-Mail from Mr. Walnum. I don't want to continue this feud, but I printed an article in Issue #59 which started it, and in Issue #62 (2-3 weeks later after I found out), I printed his E-Mail.

He asked me to please delete that from every board that I sent it. Now, common sense says that I'm not going to call every BBS in the world (*ZMAG* really spreads out from those boards), to erase this particular *ZMAG*.

But, how was I supposed to present it in a reasonable fashion so that people got the point?

Instead of commenting on his E-Mail, I just printed it. He has replied to me since, tearing me apart in a message asking why I printed it.

See, Leo Newman commented, in an editorial a week after that, as a reply to Clayton Walnum, saying that they shouldn't have handled it in that particular fashion.

But that leads me back to the whole subject that I've been writing about for the past few weeks.

MRZ: What's that?

Ron: The fact that when anyone writes an article, they don't put their name on it...they don't copyright it or say where they got it from, and so all these innocent Bulletin Boards that carry really good text articles are now paranoid and afraid that somebody's going to come after them.

MRZ: I'm not paranoid, let them come. It gives me real good publicity and free advertising. However, I'm real careful in that respect, like you are now.

RON: Sure, let them fight. I'm not making any money from it. If someone is making money from it, then that's another story, and it's their problem not mine.

MRZ: Right!

RON: I get positive support from most places. They want it every week - they want it every week, but then when I make a comment about it like: Hey, I uploaded it to you, and 5 days later it appears. Then I get E-Mail asking me why I said that. Well, the news is a week old then, that's why.

Z-NOTE: Other things were discussed, but intentionally left out. Not to deny you news, but to sorta keep the peace. My decision.

MRZ: So what's in store for the future of *ZMAG*?

RON: Well, what we're doing now is, I'm tired of the copyright restrictions on news, so we're changing over to original material.

We have Ralph Walden, Leo Newman, Mike Brown, and more. These people are going to write new things each month.

MRZ: Yes, I read the last Issue (65), and I saw an article there from Ralph Walden and a few others.

RON: Yes. It seems to be going quite well in that format. Then, I have the *ST ZMAG* which people are writing for, and those are going quite well. They are going to be larger, more indepth articles.

The *ST ZMAG* is published every 2 weeks, and it's getting to be more popular than the regular *ZMAG*.

MRZ: Why?

Ron: I have no idea. Maybe there's more people who own ST's. But the download ratio between 8-Bit and 16-Bit *ZMAGS*, in a one week period, is like 5:1 in favor of the *ST ZMAG*.

MRZ: I think the same thing is occuring with the systems themselves, but I for one will favor the Die-Hard 8-Bit systems for years to come. I have absolutely nothing against the ST's, and will get one when I get around to it, but for support, I'm glad there are people like us around.

There are still a lot of folks out there, and loads of new products in Atari land, both Hardware and Software. I won't let go. At any rate, is there any other news?

RON: Yes, and I'm putting it to print now in *ZMAG*. News on the 8-Bit emulator for the ST, and other things.

MRZ: Who's going to put that out?

RON: I'm waiting to see what *ANALOG* is going to do, since they've purchased it from Derek, the author.

MRZ: If/when the emulator gets completed, I'm likely to get the ST system. That's a sure sale. Anyway, let's talk a second on pirating.

Ron: Well, in my opinion, I feel that pirating is down a heck of a lot. There are kids that just have the type-in programs out of magazines, and that's all. But pirating, in general, had diminished quite a bit.

MRZ: Agreed, and it's about time that software publishers see this. There may be other computer system users still at the peak of pirating, but Atari folks have basically seen the light.

RON: Yes. I used to get tons of these files uploaded to the board, but if you don't recognize these individuals, it seems to stop.

MRZ: Correct. Nowadays, I'll warn a user about uploading these files, and if they continue, their logon gets deleted. They may use a different name to re-logon, but the uploading of those files ceases. I even go as far as to delete messages that deal with this subject. Things like, how to do it, and what's the best files...etc.

RON: I've found that conversations like that really hurt the boards. Local people seem to think the boards are theirs, and they discuss these things.

MRZ: Even if they pay for access to a system, it still shouldn't be done.

RON: The part that gets frustrating is I sit here everyday working on *ZMAG* for at least 2 hours, and folks will comment on the grammar or some other thing. I figure if you want good grammar and correct spelling, buy a magazine. I don't do it on purpose, but things do slip by.

Let me tell you that I've gone back to my first Issues and looked at it, and I'm embarrassed by it. But, I've watched us progress to the point of what we are. I can't change the format, because the minute I do, I get letters and E-mail.

The little x's in zmail sometimes get left out, and I get lots of letters about it.

MRZ: What are the x's for?

RON: The 2 little x's are used in the ZREAD program. Clinton Smith wrote that. The x's flag each article and separates them so you can selectively read any article rather than having to go through the whole *ZMAG* file. There are 2 ZREAD files. There's a basic version, and another that someone had compiled.

MRZ: Simple and catchy idea. Good job.

RON: We've had people write things like ZPRINT (now up to version 8), where it's an ARC'd file and gives 3 column printing for Epson and other printers. These files are always getting modified and made better.

MRZ: Super work. What does the future hold in store for *ZMAG*?

RON: Well, in 1988 sometime, we hope to have *ZMAG Magazine*, a printed magazine that will contain all Atari news, both 8-, and 16-bit news. My current readership is about 6000 strong nationally, so I think it will go well. I have over 200 BBS's carrying *ZMAG*.

So *ZMAG*, throughout this year and next year will be all original material by people writing specifically for us. None of these people are paid. We have no advertising.

I'd like to see specific User Groups get more popular,

like your *Hard Disk User Group*. Others also deserve more recognition and support, and that's why we're here.

MRZ: Great news! Well, Thanks for your support, and here's hoping *ZMAG* gets into Magazine format!

Ron: Thanks Chuck. Is there anything else you would like to know?

MRZ: Not at present. We've covered about all the current and future news so that about takes care of things.

Let me thank you, once again for this interview, and maybe we can generate some new readers between us.

Thanx Ron.

Ron: My pleasure. Good luck, and take care.

A REVIEW OF CRYSTAL

By David Sheibley

Courtesy of J-BUG Newsletter, Summer 1987

CRYSTAL is a desk accessory designed to supplement the desktop commands of the Atari 520 and 1040 ST. It also makes these commands available from within a GEM program, allowing the user to do almost any kind of file maintenance without having to exit the program. *CRYSTAL* works with both color and monochrome monitors and is supplied with resource files for both types allowing the icons used to look natural without the tall and thin effect seen on the medium resolution GEM desktop. When copying *CRYSTAL* to your boot disk, you just copy the correct resource file to the disk along with the accessory. If you're lucky enough to own both monitors merely put both files on the disk, *CRYSTAL* is smart enough to use the correct one for the monitor that is hooked up.

When you choose *CRYSTAL* from the accessory menu a large window appears on the screen containing ten icons along the top labeled ALL, NONE, FORMAT, TRASH, COPY, MOVE, PRINT, LABEL, MAKE, and ERASE. The current source and destination drives are displayed just below the icons and a directory of the source disk takes up the bottom half of the window. If the directory is too large to fit in the window you can use the scroll bar at the right to scroll up and down through it.

Before using most of the commands you must select the files or folders upon which you wish to perform the operation. It is possible to select files in a couple of different ways; you can click on the filename in the directory which turns it to bold type and displays a check mark next to the name, or you can double click on the source drive and a window will open allowing you to create a mask defining the files you want. For example, entering the mask *.ACC would select all files ending with the extender "ACC". Clicking on the ALL icon will select all of the files in the current directory while the NONE icon will deselect any selected files. A quick double click on a file will show its name, size, and creation time and date. You may also change a file's name through this method. Clicking on a folder name displays the contents of the folder and shows the pathname beneath the source drive. Included in the folder's directory are a single period and a double period. Clicking on the double period will take you back to the parent folder while the single period will immediately take you back to the root directory no matter how deep you are in folders.

The FORMAT icon allows you to format either a single or double-sided disk, you can assign a name to the disk before formatting if you wish.

The TRASH icon is used to delete selected files while the ERASE icon will delete a folder and its contents. Safety dialog boxes always appear before any destructive commands are performed.

COPY is used to make a duplicate of a file on another disk or in a different folder while the MOVE icon will automatically erase a file from the source disk after it is copied to the destination.

The PRINT icon is used to print a file to either the screen or the printer. You may choose to output all characters or just ASCII characters. When printing, you can define the page length along with headers and footers containing up to three lines of text each. Page numbering is also supported. When printing multiple files to the screen there is no way to abort quickly, you must hit QUIT for every file until they have all gone by. Needless to say if you mistakenly select ALL files and print you'll be clicking on QUIT for quite a while.

LABEL prints a directory to the printer in either normal print or in condensed print for making disk labels. You can choose to print from one to three columns and can change the one line header to whatever you wish. Unfortunately there doesn't seem to be any way to print a complete directory including folders, selecting ALL prints just the root directory and the folder names. To get a complete listing you must print the contents of each folder individually after printing the root directory.

Finally, the MAKE icon allows the creation of folders wherever you wish.

An installation program is included that allows you to change the defaults for PRINT and LABEL to work with whatever type of printer you are using along with changing headers and footers, number of label columns, and number of characters in a line. In addition, you can turn off the safety dialog boxes. This installation program modifies the accessory itself without making up a space-wasting configuration file.

Other than the problems already mentioned, and a strange propensity for screwing up the display if you try to cover the CRYSTAL screen with another instead of closing it, everything works as it should. As a cost-cutting measure the documentation for CRYSTAL comes on the disk but it is well done and prints out to only ten pages. CRYSTAL takes up about 57K but it is well worth the memory lost; once you have this accessory installed you'll never have to quit a program to format a disk or move some files again. CRYSTAL is a very useful utility and a excellent value.

CRYSTAL - \$24.95
Antic Publishing
524 Second Street
San Francisco, CA 94107
(800)443-0100 x133

(Ed. Dave is a Motorcycle Systems Manager.)

DTACK IS GROUNDED

Late word has been received that *Dtack Grounded, Inc.*, publishers of *DBASIC*, has gone out of business. Only 60 copies of their manual have been sold since July. As you may remember, they tried marketing *DBASIC* by handing out free copies and selling the manual. Existing copies may still be used, but no new revisions will ever be released.

--THE G-MAN-- THE COMPUTER POLICE WANT YOU!

By David G. Grace Special Agent
for the United States

Courtesy of the WACO PRINTOUT, October 1987

It was 5:00 AM in the modest suburban home. John Kelly was just completing the task of loading a fresh supply of tractor feed paper into his new dot matrix printer. He had temporarily halted the running of the program now in his computer. His monitor screen glowed red and contained only the cryptic message, "ProHackr Paused," in inch high letters. Under the printer was a cardboard box to catch the paper that had slowly rolled out of the printer over the past six hours. A light smile touched his lips as he thought of the telephone shopping spree he would be going on that weekend. Each sheet of the fan fold paper contained three columns of numbers, about fifty groups of numbers per column. Each group of numbers was a valid credit card number, followed by its current expiration date. This was all the data necessary to make purchases by phone. John had obtained the ProHackr program by downloading it from a BBS run by a high school kid out of his bedroom. The companion ".DOC" program had made it sound easy, and it was. He was known on the Board as "Machine Language Kelly" and often aided the kids in debugging the semi-finished programs they often received from other boards.

Kelly completed his task and took the program off "pause," then turned his reddened eyes to the stairway leading back to his warm bed. As he crossed the room and reached for the light switch, the doorbell rang. Shocked to have a visitor at this hour, Kelly peered through the door's small window onto a porch dimly lit by the first light of dawn. He found himself staring into the eyes of a Patrolman from his town's local Police Department. But it was the sight of men beside and behind the Patrolman which was giving Machine Language Kelly his current wave of barely controlled nausea. They were large men wearing blue nylon windbreakers, emblazoned with a gold badge over the heart. Kelly could see that the shoulder of one of the men also was embroidered with the letters "FCP." The man announced, "Federal Agents with a Search Warrant, open the door!" It was then that Kelly noticed that the Agent on the porch was holding a revolver, and the one behind him was carrying a shotgun. "Don't shoot, C- Man," said Machine Language Kelly as he opened the door and (let them in.)

The Patrolman quickly checked Kelly and his recliner chair for weapons before having him sit down. The man with the shotgun crossed the room, entered the kitchen and opened the back door for two more men who had been waiting there. Each wore the blue jacket with the badge and letters of the Federal Computer Police. Satisfied that he had found what he was looking for, the first FCP man into the house walked over to Kelly. "What was that you called me when we came in?" "C-Man," said Kelly, "You know...Computer Cops." Kelly somehow managed a weak smile. "C- Man," repeated the FCP Agent, as he returned his stainless steel .357 magnum revolver to its holster under his jacket. "I like that," he said, "I think the Director will like it too." His arm swept in the direction of the computer and the lightly ticking printer. "This all goes!" he said to his men. He turned again to Kelly and said, "You're under arrest for violation of Federal computer fraud laws, but now its my duty to advise you of your right. You have the right to remain silent..."

This story may be fictional, but similar scenes are being played in real life. Recently, I wrote an article about Federal software copyright laws in which I presented what I hope was an objective description of both the criminal and civil legal limits. This included mentioning some Federal law enforcement agencies that enforced those laws, such as the *Federal Bureau of Investigation*, the *Postal Inspectors* and the *Customs Service*. There are dozens of Federal agencies enforcing the law because the agencies specialize in a particular job and have their own enforcement arm to carry it out. Only a very few agencies are strictly law enforcement oriented, with the FBI being the most notable. These agencies often share the enforcement jurisdiction of a set of laws, as mentioned above, but usually there is one agency which clearly has the primary jurisdiction for a particular class of crime. Who, then, are the *Federal Computer Police*? I think you'll be surprised.

Now if you commit a crime with a computer, there could be a dozen agencies which could investigate you. In addition to the ones mentioned above, any government agency having a computer you can hack into probably has a legal arm to catch you. These people are, however, unlikely to have much background in computers because computer related crimes are only a small part of their investigative workload. But a few take computer crime more seriously. In my experience, this is especially true of the *Defense Department's Investigative Service*, where Agents attend special schools for tracing evidence through computers. Of course, they have two basic duties in preventing computer crime. To keep their computers secure and to track contract fraud in private companies who deal with the Defense Department (like those who sell us hundred dollar hammers for driving thirty dollar nails, then collect a bonus to cover cost over-runs). Incidentally, I can't mention the DIS without passing on that they have a great track record for hiring the best-looking smart women (is it the smartest good-looking women) in Federal law enforcement. But these computer whiz-kids aren't the ones who'll knock at your door if you're burning the midnight oil with your modem, a credit card hacker program and a list of main-frame access numbers. But who will?

They haven't been particularly active in the media, but certainly have been in the streets. They're a well-known agency, but not for enforcing computer related laws. Their men are relatively new to the home computer, but not the main-frame. They're often high-profile day to day, but usually low-profile in their investigative work. They enforce virtually every computer related crime you can think of, and a few more. These include thefts involving bank automatic teller machines, stolen credit cards, fraud involving telephone services like *Sprint* and *MCI*, and just about any hacker invasion of a main-frame you can name. They're looking for a few good men, and a computer background might be just the ammunition you need to ace out the next guy for a job. If they arrest you, the trip to jail will probably be the most secure you've ever taken. But who are those guys?

I'm sure you've seen, more than once probably, a cartoon in a computer group newsletter or magazine depicting the arrest of some home computer hobbyist by a pair of Computer Police. Although the caption underneath is different in every version, the look of the two Compu-Cops is the same. They're tall, wear dark glasses, and sport dark suits with revolvers bulging under the lapels. As whimsically as they may have been drawn, this accurately describes them as they are usually seen in public. They are the most accidentally photographed cops in America, simply because of where they stand. By now, I suspect that most of you have identified them by their

more official name, they are the *Special Agents of the United States Secret Service*.

They may be best known for protecting the President and other dignitaries, but they also carry a low enforcement investigative load. For many years, this was limited almost exclusively to enforcing laws on stolen government checks or securities and the counterfeiting of currency (as depicted in the movie *To Live and Die in L.A.* a story written by a former Agent). Recently, however, they have received a string of new laws which make them, as far as we computer hobbyists are concerned, America's *Compu-Cops*. They were involved recently, here in the Pittsburgh area, in the arrest of several juveniles and others for computer theft charges stemming from credit card phone purchases. As the case is still pending, I can't comment on the allegations or the investigative techniques used. But I do regularly cross forks at the Federal Building cafeteria with the *Secret Service Agents* working computer crime. I asked them if they had anything I should pass on to Atari users.

One Agent warned that hacker programs are proliferating in the BBS community which aid in the obtaining of literally hundreds of valid credit card numbers in a few hours or which provide valid numbers and codes for free access to on-line subscriber services and for making *Sprint* or *MCI* calls, all at the expense of someone else. I know, because I've been the victim twice in the last year. I didn't have to pay the bill that was run up, but I lost that service for at least three weeks each time. These programs, under various names like **CCHACKER** and **VISAHACK**, have been primarily written for versions and with other names. Even telephone numbers and first level passwords or instructions for Government mainframes (shades of *Wargames*!) have been known to show up. I don't try them myself. Especially with the advent of a new device which registers the source of an incoming call immediately - no more seven minute manual traces. In any case, the *Secret Service* is likely to hire a large amount of new Agents in the next two years. A Bachelor's Degree is required, but a computer background could assure you of keeping busy when the Presidential Campaigns are over. If you'd prefer to run some of those hacker programs, and meet them under less cordial circumstances, they'll be happy to oblige. In either case, friend or foe, the Computer Police want YOU!

Mr. Ken Vossler,
of the FBI
will speak on:
Computer Crime and
Software Piracy
at the Dec. 9
ACORN Meeting
in Room 262 S
Brighton High School

THE HOT LINE LIST

Here is the long awaited Hot Line List mentioned in last month's Kernel. If you have any questions on particular software or hardware, look at this list and see if anyone is listed. Then call the appropriate person. Please respect the time limitations listed for each person and also don't call too late in the evening.

| hardware/software | person's name | phone # | time limits |
|---|-----------------|---------------|----------------------------|
| Atari writer First Excellent word Processor | Allen Schroeder | 227-3152 | after 5 pm |
| Basic Programming Video Games | Bill Hood | 226-8398 | after 3 pm |
| 8 Bit MIDI Music | Jeff Kyle | 889-2481 | evenings |
| Speedscript | Scott Reeder | 473-2686 | 5 pm - 10 pm |
| Basic Programming | David Eichel | 482-8117 | 5 pm - 8 pm |
| Library or "anything else" | Nick Cup | 266-1468 | 6 pm - 9 pm |
| Basic XL, MAC 65 DOS XL, Visicalc Writer's Tool, Filemanager 800+ | Chris Reich | 254-2906 | evenings |
| Analog/Antic from start of publication | Jim Hall | 398-2925 | 8 pm |
| Synfile, Syncalc, SX212 modem, BasicXE | Mike Garland | (315)524-3321 | after 4pm |
| Micromod Turbobase | Paul Matte | 1-346-5212 | |
| 8-bit BASIC, 400/ 800 hardware, 1040st B204 hard disk, VIP Word Perfect | Don Kussee | 225-4429 | after 4:30pm |
| 8-bit BASIC Assembly/AMAC, C, Dos 2.0, 2.5, XL, AtariwriterPlus, Syncalc, B/Graph, P/R: Connection, Panasonic KXP 1080 Printer | Jeff Summers | 342-7632 | evenings |
| 1040 ST, US Modula 2 Megamax "C" | Stephen Ruiz | 223-7983 | after 5pm |
| Time Works | Lee Morelli | 442-0988 | after 5 pm |
| VIP 5 pm | Don Allis | 247-4429 | after |
| ST Computers | Herman Chen | 424-5066 | after 3:30 pm |
| 8-bit and ST hardware and interfacing | Dave Vogel | 657-5413 | after 7 pm |
| Publishing Partner | Candi Nelson | 334-5513 | anytime |
| 8-bit and ST General | David Holtz | 425-3250 | after 7 pm Mon. -Thurs. |
| C programming | Terry Shugars | 1-394-9403 | Evenings, except Friday |
| Games(KQ &SQ) | Herman Chen | 424-5066 | Evenings except Wed. |
| Adventure games | Dan Warren | 424-2185 | Mon. 6 -8 pm |
| Infocom games | Luther Miller | 461-3315 | Evenings |

SUPERBASE PERSONAL

Buddy L. Hammerton, Jr.,
A.C.E. Production Manager

Courtesy of Eugene ACE Newsletter, Aug/Sept 1987

For those of you there looking for an easy to use relational database system, then look no further than *SUPERBASE PERSONAL* from *Precision Software Limited*.

SUPERBASE is a GEM based database program for people tired of the simplicity of programs like *DBMaster One* or the awkwardness of *Regent Base*. All functions are available through drop down menus, and the most frequent commands are available directly through the Atari ST keyboard. Each menu item has an associated dialog box, this is the way *SUPERBASE* communicates with you and receives instructions on what to do next.

Anyone who has used an audio tape recorder or video cassette recorder will be able to perform most functions in *SUPERBASE* without extensive reading of the excellent user manual. Along the bottom of the screen is a row of symbols similar in appearance to those of a VCR. These controls let you scroll the database, forward or backward, pause at any time, move to the first or last record, and stop at any time.

There are numerous ways to find specific information in the database file. A special Key Lookup button will find any record using the current index, and you are not limited to one index, *SUPERBASE* allows up to 999 indexes for each file. Another button accesses external files which can be linked to each record, these files can be pictures (picture format is: IMG (a utility is provided to convert *DEGAS* and *NeoChrome* files) or ASCII text files.

Of course no database is of any use if you cannot print out your data in a useful and coherent manner. This is where the majority of the power of *SUPERBASE* lies. The reports possible with *SUPERBASE* are just impossible with all the other databases I have seen for the Atari ST.

You are able to link together information in six different database files and come up with one report, at the same time you can perform calculations on any number of fields. The results of this type of report generation, manageable sections and you do not have to work on the whole thing at one time.

Then there is a list of mathematical functions that rivals some spreadsheet programs. These functions include absolute value, date, day, exponent, integer, logarithm, random, along with most trigonometric functions. During report generation there are reserved words that can compete with most dialects of BASIC. All of which, makes life easier for those of us who need complex reports generated from information gathered from various sources.

Then there is the documentation, all 300+ pages. I personally regard documentation as one of the most important features of a software package. Is the documentation adequate? Yes, each function, button, menu selection, and dialog box are thoroughly discussed in it's pages. Is there a complete index? Yes and no, in the index you will find most of the information you are looking for, and what you don't find there you may be able to find in the table of contents. Are there illustrations? Yes, these help you understand better what is going on especially if you

aren't working through the program at the same time. And lastly, is there a complete tutorial, both disk based and written? Again the answer is yes, as a matter of fact after each section in which new functions are introduced, there are short 15 to 20 minute tutorials to guide you through the learning process.

One point that needs to be mentioned. Often times I have created a database file, then input numerous records, just to find out that I left out information I needed, or had a useless field. *SUPERBASE* lets you change the definition at any time, and if you feel that the index you are using is not efficient enough you can change that too. All in all I like many of the things that *SUPERBASE* does, and as opposed to *Data Manager ST*, it's a lot less buggy. And compared to *DBMaster One* or *BASE TWO*, it's disk based so more data can be stored, and it is fully relational. At \$149.00 retail, *SUPERBASE* is an excellent value. Together with its ability to link text and graphic files to your records, and other database records, this program has unlimited possibilities.

RAMDISKS FOR YOUR 320 XE

By Alan Friedman

Courtesy of Current Notes, October, 1987

After successfully adding a new 320K upgrade to my 130XE, I faced a whole new problem. What to do with all this power?

There are a lot of ramdisk programs on the 256XL upgrade public domain disk, but due to a difference in how the 256XL upgrade accesses the ram, these programs won't work on the 130XE upgrade.

Of course, *Sparta DOS* will configure the additional ram into a ramdisk, but I wanted to find a program to do it cheaply (*Sparta DOS* is \$40) and one that would work with DOS 2.0S and 2.5. I figured the cost of the time on *CompuServe* would be a good investment, and it was. Doing a search in the Utility section of the Atari 8-bit library, I found two XE ramdisk programs. They were *RAMDSK* and *SMARTR.230*. Both of these programs have DOC files that are fairly thorough.

RAMDSK configures the additional ram into two 707-sector ramdisks. They are automatically set up as D3 and D4. They are not initialized and before being used must be initialized through DOS or an *XIO* command. I tried a copy of programs with these ramdisks. I set up the *AMISXM10* bulletin board with the ramdisk initialized and everything went fine. I did find several programs that did not like the change in the OS and therefore tried the other ramdisk program, *SMARTR.230*.

SMARTR.230 only created one 707-sector ramdisk and only worked with DOS 2.0S, however I was able to use *KYAN PASCAL* with this system. This only increased the ramdisk by 230 sectors over the original 130K ramdisk, but this gave me the additional room I needed to keep *DUP.SYS* on the ramdisk and to transfer the rest of the *KIX* commands for increased speed of operation.

Since this is a fairly new upgrade I am sure it won't be long before someone comes up with a program that uses all the ram as a ramdisk and allows you to decide what drive you want the ramdisk to become and that will be DOS 2.5 compatible.

With the promised arrival of the double-sided double-density disk drive from Atari just around the corner,

this may become the most useful upgrade for the XE to come down the pike so far.

WAL SYHPRUM "GNORW OG LLIW ,GNORW OG NAC TAHT GNIHTYNA"

Courtesy of L.C.A.C.E. Newsletter, Oct. 1987

No good deed goes unpunished.
Leak-proof seals, will.
Self starters, won't.
Interchangeable parts, won't.
There is always one more bug.
Nature is a mother.
Don't mess with Mrs. Murphy!
90% of everything is crud.
If you're feeling good, don't worry, you'll get over it.
All warranties expire upon payment of invoice.
Where you stand on an issue depends on where you sit.
Never eat prunes when you are famished.
Friends come and go, but enemies accumulate.
If you try to please everybody, nobody will like it.
You will always find something in the last place you look.
The chance of a piece of bread falling with the buttered side down is directly proportional to the cost of the carpet.
No matter how long or hard you shop for an item, after you've bought it, it will be on sale... somewhere...CHEAPER!
No one's life, liberty, or property are safe while the legislature is in session.
The other line always moves faster.
In order to get a loan, you must first prove you don't need it.
Anything you try to fix will take longer and cost more than you thought.
If you fool around with a thing for very long you will screw it up.
A \$300 picture tube will protect a 10 cent fuse by blowing first.
If it jams, force it.
If it breaks, it needed replacing anyway.
Any tool dropped while repairing a car will roll underneath to the exact center of the vehicle.
The repairman will never have seen a model quite like yours before.
When a broken appliance is demonstrated for the repairman, it will work perfectly.
A pipe gives a wise man time to think, and a fool something to stick in his mouth.
Everybody should believe in something.
I believe I'll have another drink.
Build a system that a fool can use, and only a fool will use it.
Everyone has a scheme for getting rich that will not work.
In any hierarchy, each individual rises to his own level of incompetence and remains there.
You will remember that you forgot to take out the trash, when the garbage truck is two doors away.
The race is not always to the swift no the battle to the strong, but that's the way to bet.
There's never time to do it right, but there's always time to do it over.
When in doubt, mumble.
When in trouble, delegate.
Anything good in life is either illegal, immoral, or fattening.
It is morally wrong to allow suckers to keep their money.
A bird in the hand is safer than one overhead.
Murphy's golden rule: Whoever has the gold makes the rules.
Everything east of the San Andreas Fault will eventually plunge into the Atlantic ocean.
Nature always sides with the hidden flaw.

DEAR EDITOR PIRACY - A Letter to PSAN

Courtesy of Puget Sound Atari News, October 1987

Not wanting to sound like a broken record, but, let's talk of piracy... again. This time though, not of commercial software, but rather 'public domain' software. The piracy lies wherein somewhere along the way, the original author's name is replaced by some *%&@!! who felt the small enhancement, he/she/it, made to a good program warranted him the right to replace the author's name with his own.

I personally modify several programs a year, mostly small enhancements to ease the use of said programs. If the enhancement is very large I may add a line or two to the program, usually along the line of: 'Modified by on such and such a date'. I always leave the original author's name and other data intact in the program. After all, he came up with (the) idea and made it work and was kind enough to let us all have it free of charge.

Now I know you are wondering why would I bring up this subject with such a vengeance. So I will tell you, it is not only my story, but also that of several other authors who have given up because of this. I was on a BBS recently, on the East Coast. I saw some interesting titles, mostly utilities. So I downloaded them. I started trying them out without looking at them first (the programs themselves.) At once I was surprised to find a program that worked very much like one I had written not so very long ago. The title screen was different, one or two keys were a bit different, but all in all, the same program. I immediately looked at the source code. (Actually I had to call the BBS back and download the source code.) I looked it over, sure enough it was mine, I like to think I have my own 'style' of writing programs. But truly, the code was the same except for MY NAME and a few small changes that were made to the program. Even the copyright notice was the same, but for the name. Now, I don't write a lot of programs that I let out to the public domain, but those that I do, I don't expect this to happen to them. So using your own imagination, you can feel what I was feeling that night. I called that BBS and left a rather terse message to the SYSOP about that program. The SYSOP phoned the next day, voice. I explained, in a calmer tone, what I have said here. He gave me the name of the BBS he got it from. So off on a goose chase I went. The next SYSOP got it from a member of the club he belonged to. I called this person on the phone. He got it from a BBS in Texas, now we're getting somewhere, or so I thought. I called that BBS, after a few weeks I finally got a response from the 'BBS' (I never did know who I was 'talking to' there.) Basically 'they' said that 'they' were unsure of how it got on their BBS. However, it was a useful program, and they were going to leave it up. Fine and dandy, how about changing it so I get the proper credit. Answer 'NOPE'. You must prove to our satisfaction that you wrote it, and from where we sit we don't think you can. Great, now what do I do?

I wrote this letter in hopes of reaching folks to let them know what people like me think of people like them and the *%&@!! who STOLE my program in the first place.

Signed,
(Name withheld by request.)

A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR...

By Candi Nelson

I would like to thank everyone for the positive comments on the ACORN Kernel.

There are a few things I would like to say about putting together the Kernel. There is a deadline set each month for article submission. I would very much appreciate all articles submitted BY or even BEFORE the deadline. During the week of the deadline I try to get on Apex to see if any articles were left for me. (Some of you might know how hard it is to get on Apex sometimes.) Once I receive them, all articles have to go through the carriage return stripper program before they can be imported to Publishing Partner. Any articles that were written on the 8-bit computer are converted to ASCII from ATASCII before being stripped.

After that is done, each article must be imported into Publishing Partner. I read every word while typesetting the headings, the by-lines, the reprint lines, and italicizing and bolding titles, important words, etc. I also correct spelling and grammatical errors. This all takes time.

It takes 30 hours or more of work on the computer to typeset the Kernel. There have been times that *Publishing Partner* has locked up and pages of work are lost and must be redone. No program is foolproof. I have learned to save my work more often but this problem still exists.

I have tried to incorporate as many ideas as I could in the past few months, including using little pictures where possible. I could use an Atari Fuji symbol drawn in *Degas* to include on the front cover in place of the "A" in ACORN. Any volunteers?

It would be nice to see more ACORN members writing articles for this newsletter. Thanks to all who have already submitted articles. We are lacking in the area of program reviews.

If you submit an article, please follow these few guidelines to make my job a little easier:

1. Use any word processor (8-bit or ST) but use NO special characters or control codes.
2. Please put 2 carriage returns between paragraphs and between EACH line of program listings.
3. Articles may be submitted already in *Publishing Partner* format. Please set up you page in double column in the following size:
Column 1: Column 2:
x1: 0.5 x1: 4.5
y1: 0.5 y1: 0.5
x2: 4 x2: 8
y2: 10.1 y2: 10.1

4. If you are using *Publishing Partner*, use 9 point type in the Schoolbook font. If you don't have the laser printer fonts use 9 point Helvetica. The laser printer fonts available are Schoolbook, Helvetica, Times Roman, Helvetica Narrow, Chancery, Avantgarde, Courier, Palatino.

5. After your article is written F-mail it to me at Apex BBS or hand it to me on disk at the ACORN meeting, (your disk will be returned.)

After the *Kernel* is finished it is uploaded to Apex so **Tom Bellucco** can print it out on his laser printer. It is then picked up and delivered to **David Cox** who has it copied at a print shop. Then the 275+ copies are delivered to **Allen Schroeder** to be mailed. Since we mail the *Kernel* on a bulk permit we must send at least 200 copies out at each mailing. The *Kernel* must be folded, stapled, and have a mailing label put on it. The *Kernel* must then be sorted by zip codes and rubber banded. This procedure is also time consuming. Allen would like 2 or 3 volunteers to help him with this. With enough help this does not take too much time. Also to be noted is that the post office has up to 10 days to deliver any bulk permitted mail. This could also account to delays in receiving the *Kernel*.

We are trying to get the *Kernel* out as early as possible before a general meeting, but delays can occur. The ACORN General meetings are held on the **second Wednesday** of the month unless otherwise notified. (and then you will be notified at least 1 month prior to the change).

Congratulations to Scott Reeder, who was elected as Treasurer, at the Nov. 18 meeting. Scott Replaces Reid Hoadley, who has moved to Glen Falls, NY. Best of luck in your new home and new job, Reid.

REPRINT HALL OF FAME

Congratulations to **Tom Bellucco** for the reprint of his article "Using the Bulletin Board - The First Call" in *The Atarian*, The Northeast Atari Team Newsletter, Nov. 87 and in *The Lake County Illinois ACE News Journal*, Nov. '87

THE MEGA ST4 - HANDS ON! ATARI'S NEWEST COMPUTER

By Dr. Bruce D. Noonan, STARBASE

Courtesy of Puget Sound Atari News, October 1987

OK, you're probably asking how did this guy get ahold of a Mega ST4? As an Atari developer, I found that I was entitled to one of the first production models of this fantastic computer, including a Blitter chip, for a substantial savings. I won't mention how, as this was without a monitor, but I understand the retail should be near \$2600. Still, when compared to the thousand dollar per megabyte standard, even at this price Atari fares much better than the competition.

The computer is sleekly styled, with all the brains in a unit 13" x 13" by 2 3/4" high. The "box" contains a double-sided floppy drive on the right front, and the cartridge port on the left rear. The coiled keyboard cord plugs in next to the cartridge port. All the ports except for mouse and joystick ports are located on the main unit. The joystick and mouse ports are located in the keyboard rear, with "tunnels" for the cords to each end. The main unit contains a fan which seems substantially quieter than my 20 meg. Supra Drive. A small removable plastic insert is art of the posterior wall of the main unit, which has an expansion slot inside. The case is reinforced with 9 internal supports allowing placement of the monitor on its top.

There is also a compartment for installation of two AA batteries for the internal clock.

I am impressed with the lack of power-supply cords and the ease of placing the keyboard on my lap, for example. There are two foldable supports under the keyboard which allow it to be propped up to a better typing angle. I LOVE the keyboard! The keys are much more responsive, less mushy than the 520, and reminiscent of my old Atari 800.

When my Mega arrived, it did NOT have the Blitter in it. Apparently, each of the chips was undergoing individual testing. However, 13 days later the Blitter arrived with two xeroxed blurry diagrams of the case interior, and arrows pointing to two pads which needed cutting and the socket for the Blitter was indicated. I rushed to put the square Blitter chip in the socket, but was apparently unable to cut the solder on the pads completely with my x-acto knife. I say apparently, because when I reassembled the case, the ST refused to boot! Sinking feeling in my stomach, sweaty palms. I'm a software hacker, and hardware and electricity are like magic as far as I'm concerned.

Trying to maintain my cool, I bundled up the scattered parts -- case cover, base, circuit board, RF shield, keyboard and power cord, and headed for the local computer store with a plea for them to stay open and suck some solder for me. It was done at no charge. (Thanks, Family Computers of Lynnwood!) And best of all, there now was an indication at the bottom of the Options menu of "Blitter". Whewwww! The possibility of trying a 520 is one thing. But a multi-thousand dollar chip barbecue was not my idea of fun!

I was anxious to try out some of my favorite software to test compatibility. Unfortunately, the first one I tried was *K-Switch* from *Kuma*. It seemed to boot okay but when I tried shifting from one half of ram to the other by pressing both Shift keys with the Alternate key, nothing happened. Speaking with Atari about this, I was told that *Kuma* used all sorts of devious means in programming which is not supported by the new ROMs. As expected, one of my other favorite programs, *Mousetrap*, also failed to work, as they poked three undocumented locations for mouse parameters which apparently have been moved in the new ROMs.

I also experienced problems with stopping a *GFA Basic* program by pressing Control-Shift and Alternate at the same time. It doesn't work. However, the compiler, editor and programs run otherwise without a hitch.

I had an old copy of *Regent Spell* with TOS.IMG on it. When I deleted the file to get more room for adding dictionary words, it ran fine on my 520 ST. But the boot sector apparently gave fits to the Mega. As you know, only the directory entry is removed when a file is deleted. The file still is on the disk. Anyway, I kept getting bombs if I tried to boot with the disk. If I booted with another disk, *Regent Spell* worked just fine.

I played around loading some foreign TOS's. It seemed to take a very long time before the desktop appeared. This is due to the OS zeroing out all of memory one byte at a time after loading the TOS from disk.

So far, I have created some truly LARGE RAMdisks using *Compute!'s* recoverable RAMdisk. *Michtron's* MDISK only allows 820K maximum. *Megamax* and *Alcyon C* compilers work as usual. I did have problems with the

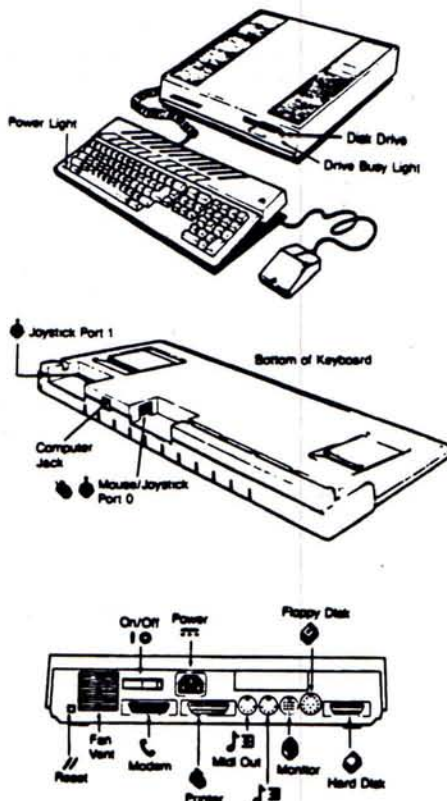
automatic *RAMdisk* on the *ST TALK* disk. I could download into it and copy out of it, but then the directory became scrambled and the OS failed to recognize it being present.

Other programs running well are *Flight Simulator II* (no, the Blitter didn't seem to speed it up), *Leaderboard*, *Laser Chess*, *Monopoly* (some speed up with the Blitter 'on'), *Athena II*, *Psion Chess*, *Chessmaster 2000*, *Publishing Partner*, *Star Glider*, *Bridge 5.0*, and of course, *ST Writer 2.0*, which allows formatting of disks in the fast format with the new ROMs.

Cornerman had some problems. It would not install and boot-up failed if the *DESKTOP.INF* file was saved with Blitter 'on'. If the Blitter was turn on AFTER boot-up, all seemed to work as usual.

For those IBM types, it may come as a shock that *PC DITTO!* does not run IBM programs properly with the new ROMs. I tried running *LOTUS 123* on the MEGA ST4 and the title screen would not appear properly and the computer locked up. *PC DITTO!* appeared to load and was able to load in the *MS DOS* off of a version 3.3 disk. It's not a major disappointment to me, however, since everything I have seen run on the old ROMs went very slowly.

I'm really looking forward to what this new machine will be capable of. Especially animations using a large *RAMdisk* to hold sequential picture files, and large document files. Atari has finally produced a very solid business machine with the MEGAs. I am interested to know if *PC DITTO!* runs on the Mega. I plan to try it in the near future. I'll let you know.



Graphics courtesy of
The LA-ACE Newsletter, 9/87

LEO NEWMAN INTERVIEW

Uploaded to Atari Apex BBS by Chuck Lanzott, HDUG

August 10, 1987

To gain an insight on the *OASIS BBS*, I called Leo Newman, and below is the result of that conversation....

MRZ: Tell us about the *OASIS BBS* program. When did you start this project?

LEO: Well we started *OASIS* 2 years ago. Originally there were 3 of us involved in the original program. There was a fellow by the name of **Rich Renner** from Los Angeles, and **Ralph Walden** and myself.

MRZ: Did Ralph Walden do the original programming?

LEO: No, the original code for *OASIS* was written by Rich Renner, and that was the initial code.

MRZ: How much of the code writing did you actually do?

LEO: Well, boy that's really hard to say because it has been such a conglomeration of the 3 of us working on it. I'd hate to try to put into a percentage. Let's just say that a portion of it was written by all of us, with the major heart of the code written by Rich Renner.

MRZ: Are you still going to support the BBS on the *HELP BBS*?

LEO: Yes, I am. As a matter of fact, I've run a full-time 24 hour support board for it.

MRZ: The reason I asked, was I think I read someplace that you were going to discontinue putting up the most current versions of the *OASIS BBS* under the support section. Is that true?

LEO: Well, we're in the process of trying to come up with, and determine a good way to, allow our SysOps to have updates without having to pay for them. We really don't want to charge for updates.

MRZ: Can't you control that with user access and security level?

LEO: Well, unfortunately, piracy being what piracy is, and there's a tremendous amount of piracy in all software as you know and even with *OASIS* being only \$15.00, somebody who has access to our system, who has paid for the software, is passing out each one of the current versions.

MRZ: I can see where that's almost impossible to stop.

LEO: Right.

MRZ: Well, enough on that. Tell us about Glenda.

LEO: **Glenda Stocks** is a nurse from Brockton Massachusetts, which is right outside of Boston. I've visited with Glenda on a few occasions, and she is a SysOp. She really had nothing to do with the actual *OASIS BBS* itself other than running a board. At one time we asked Glenda to give us some east coast support.

MRZ: I hear (and see) that she's a programmer.

LEO: Well, she was a darn good BASIC programmer. Actually, just to give other SysOps an idea of just how easy it is to write their games and utilities and so forth for *OASIS*, Glenda does this now using *MAC/65*, which she just bought.

MRZ: Great. That brings up another question. I've read so many conflicting stories, both on the *HELP BBS* and within the documentation on the master *OASIS BBS* disk. What language is the BBS written in?

LEO: The BBS is written in *MAC/65*.

MRZ: I heard it had some subroutines written in *C Language*.

LEO: That is not correct. The only thing that is written in *C* is some of the SysOp utilities that Ralph wrote. The actual BBS itself is 100% *MAC/65 Language*.

MRZ: Ok, I just bought MAC/65. Let's say I wanted to write some new utilities or games for *OASIS BBS*. How do I know which area of memory to use to write those new subroutines?

LEO: We give you, as a SysOp, if you are a registered SysOp, access to a base on our board. In that base we have an archived file which is an assembly equates listing program that you would need. You, as a SysOp, can take that equates listing which gives you all the memory locations and information that you would need to tie into the BBS program itself, and do so.

MRZ: So, if you are familiar with MAC/65, you can write a program, and use those equates to simply tie into the BBS program.

LEO: Correct. Any kind of program you want to hang onto the BBS program, you are free to write. We even supply sample source codes for some of the minor games that come with the BBS so that the person has the information on what we're doing.

MRZ: How many other people do you have that are writing subroutines, utilities and such for the *OASIS BBS*?

LEO: Right now *OASIS* is getting tremendous support from many SysOps. There are probably 15 different SysOps right now who are cranking out games and utilities. As a matter of fact, we will have an ARCVIEW option available sometime within the next 6 or 7 days.

MRZ: This will be used to view the contents of an Archived file on-line on the BBS?

LEO: That's right.

MRZ: Interesting. But to expound on that a bit, I've found something that is really a pain and it bugs me to no end. As you know, I've been calling your board quite often to keep abreast of the new additions by some of these authors. I've found, that when I get one of these newly written games, it must be un-archived and assembled according to the documentation written by the author. This has been impossible.

LEO: Understand, that all the games and utilities made for the BBS are completely done by the authors. We didn't write them.

MRZ: Which means that we have to try to figure out what they are trying to tell us.

LEO: Hopefully, you've also read the message that I've left explaining basically what the file is supposed to do. If the SysOp is good enough, they will write some decent documentation that will give you the input that you need to get it working. The SysOps that write the games and utilities need to do a little more research and work on their own programs to write the documentation.

As a programmer myself, I will tell you that it is very difficult to write a program and then turn around and write the documentation yourself.

MRZ: I agree 100%.

LEO: You know what it's supposed to do, that's the problem.

MRZ: Right. Passing on the "simple" instructions concerning setting up the program is easier if someone else did it. A user.

LEO: What I'm in the process of doing, course it's a little hard to keep up with since the programs, the games and the other utilities are coming in so fast from SysOps, it's hard for me to do, but I am in the process of rewriting documentation.

MRZ: The documentation for the BBS?

LEO: Well, not for the BBS presently. Right now, for all the support files that are going on the board.

MRZ: That's a tough job.

LEO: Yeah it is. It's hard to keep up with because on the average right now I'm getting 5 to 10 uploads a week of new programs to be run with the BBS.

MRZ: Well then, you're running out of options on the main menu are you not?

LEO: No, as a matter of fact we can expand that main menu in a few ways with a program that Glenda Stocks wrote. It's called the EZMENU. We will be able to tree out from that menu and expand tremendously.

MRZ: Similar to (sorry Keith) Express!?

LEO: Very similar to what Express! is doing, yes. As a matter of fact, a lot of SysOps find quite a bit of similarity in certain portions of both BBS's.

MRZ: Why \$15.00?

LEO: Why \$15.00... Boy, that's a good question. I've asked myself that several times, and so has Ralph.

We tried to provide SysOps with a BBS program that was dependable at the lowest cost that was possible. Now we don't make our living selling the *OASIS BBS* program. That's just something we've done for more or less a side-line.

I'm an insurance agent full time, and Ralph is a professional programmer working for *MicroSoft*. So that gives you all a little background on us.

We've probably actually recovered 90% of our development costs at this point.

MRZ: 90%! That's something to be proud of.

LEO: Yes. We're real happy with that. We would, of course, like to break even to get out of the hole. There's no doubt about that.

One of the things that we've done to maintain a low cost ratio on it is basically doing it all ourselves. Bulk disk purchases, etc. Just to give you an idea, I just sat here this afternoon and ran off 50 more copies of the BBS. We don't farm anything out, so we don't add any cost.

MRZ: so there are a lot of new files not yet placed on the HELP BBS.

LEO: Right. Hopefully, when ICD comes out with their new DOS, those files and others won't have to be files we have to write. Time will tell though.

(Reference was made here to a file that *Network: Atari* is creating, but is deleted from this text for future reference.) With the BBSASM.ARC file that's available to the SysOps on the HELP BBS you'll be able to write a program that can be run from any option on the BBS. This has all the equates and things that the SysOp can use to write a file to be run on the BBS.

MRZ: This has to be said. When the *OASIS BBS* program surfaced, quite a few *Express! BBS* SysOps switched over.

LEO: I'll tell you, on the average I'll receive about 20-25 orders a week for *OASIS*, and the majority of the SysOps are former *Express!* and *Carina* SysOps.

MRZ: What ever happened to *BBCS*?

LEO: I really couldn't tell you other than it's gone. Scott Brause moved. He quit supporting it, and *ANTIC* dropped it.

MRZ: *ANTIC* has dropped *BBCS*?

LEO: I believe so.

MRZ: Rumor has it that **Keith Ledbetter** is coming out with another version of *Express! 850 BBS*.

LEO: Well, I'm sure Keith is going to come out with a good version. Keith's a good programmer. I will say this...he's going to have to work fast.

MRZ: Why is that?

LEO: Well, we have a few things that we're working on.

(NOTE: I've decided to leave out this part of the conversation in respect to Leo and the HELP BBS. Call the HELP BBS to get the details. His information will be public before this newsletter hits the stands.)

MRZ: I still don't understand why you decided on the \$15.00 price tag. you probably could have charged more.

LEO: Well, there's no doubt that had we priced *OASIS* at \$25, or \$30, or \$35, or even \$40 *OASIS* would have sold.

MRZ: I think the main reason that I switched temporarily from *Express!* to *OASIS* (Keith is gonna hit me for that), was the fact that I could put all 120 Meg on-line at once. I have a rather large library of PD programs, and *Express!*'s 8 pathname limit couldn't do this. The new version will.

LEO: Right.

MRZ: Well, good luck on the new business opportunities you'll be offering SysOps (see above).

LEO: Well, it'll be unique. Nobody else will do it. I'm sure that if you look at *Express!* or *Carina*, they're not going to turn their SysOps loose like we'll be doing.

MRZ: That's probably true. Listen, thanx for all the information, and I hope things become even more profitable to you all.

LEO: Thanks. I hope the *Hard Disk User Group* goes well for you.

MRZ: Well thanx. It seems to be flowering just fine. Hopefully we can both make some profit.

LEO: Great. I appreciate the call Chuck. Take care.

MRZ: See ya.

I DON'T NEED TO JUSTIFY OWNING AN 8-BIT *OR* AN ST!

**- A Counter-Opinion -
By Dave Yearke**

Excerpted in part from *BOAST*, October 1987

Common themes in user group newsletters these days seem to be "Why I Bought an ST," "Why I'd Never Part With My 8-bit," etc. You've read articles of this type in *BOAST* and *POKEY* lately, and I thought I'd touch on a few points. First of all, let me say that I own both computers, and am happy with both of them. I probably wouldn't have considered buying an ST if my needs as a programmer hadn't been frustrated. The 8-bit, when properly programmed, has exceptional speed and power in word processing, spreadsheeting, game-playing, graphics, etc. Let me start out by saying that we have NEVER, to the best of my knowledge, knocked the 8-bit Atari or its users in these pages. Sadly, the same is not true of the other 8-bit and ST publications, who feel they must justify their position by knocking someone else's.

The incentive for this article came from one I just read in *POKEY*, the official newsletter of the **Western New York Atari Users' Group**. Dave Arlington, the author, and I have known each other for several years, and worked on a few issues of *POKEY* together before I left to devote my efforts to *BRAG*ST*. While I think that there are few people in this area who have done more for personal computing than Dave, I regretfully must take issue with the opinions he presents in his article entitled, "Why I Did Not Buy an ST (or 8-bits Forever!)" (I might add that this

article is a credit to Dave; I wouldn't even THINK of writing it if I knew he would get angry at me [aggravated, perhaps ...]. I fully expect a rebuttal from him!)

Dave starts by stating "right from the start, that this is not an anti-ST article." He then proceeds to justify his position by making some unfair and out-of-context statements. I take no issue with his statements rebutting the opinion that the 8-bit is dead; I, too, feel they will continue to serve many people for many years to come. His approach, however, is to start by saying that neither the ST, Amiga, or Macintosh has "taken the computer world by storm" While it's true that the ST and Amiga are still experiencing birthing pains, the same is not true of the Mac. It has become one of the most popular non-MS-DOS-based personal systems around, and is now into its second generation. At the rate Apple is going my next machine, if I decide that I've outgrown my ST, may very well be a Mac II. He is right in stating that the 8-bits dominate the home market early right now; the home computer boom of the early '80s insured that. In a world dominated by Atari 8-bits, Commodore 64s, and MS-DOS machines, it's tough to be the new guy!

Dave appears to reason that Apple and Commodore gave their new 16-bit machines different, distinct names because they didn't want to offend the 8-bit owners. I beg to differ, but I believe they did it to avoid the labels "toy," "archaic," etc. that have been associated with their previous machines (those are not my opinions, by the way). They want to break into the business world, and they are NOT going to do it with low-end, 6502-based machines! The 6502 is a good processor, but an old one. There are better, more powerful alternatives these days. I feel as Dave does that we bought our Atari 8-bits because we felt they were technically superior to the Apple and C-64, and yes, they still are, but an 8-bit Atari cannot compare from a technical standpoint with a modern, 68000-based or 800386-based personal computer.

I'll skip Dave's comments about the 8-bit's abundance of software and lack of new development by Atari, I believe they are correct and don't pertain to the issue at hand, and move on to his "comparison" of the ST and the 8-bit. Yes, the ST's processor is over 4 times as fast as the 8-bit's, and yes, the program size for ST software is comparatively bigger, but not necessarily because the 8-bit is so much more optimized, as he suggests. The 68000 processor uses instructions that are 16 bits in length, not 8 as with the 6502 (there's two times the size right there!). Also, programs don't have to be as conscious of memory because the average ST has 512 Kilobytes or 1 Megabyte of RAM, as opposed to 64K or 130K in the 8-bits. More room for data storage, less need to spend time squeezing code down, more efficient because you can have internal tables of numbers which can be scanned quickly instead of having to do tedious calculations every time you run a program. The sentence "While the ST disk drives are much faster than the 8-bit drives, each graphics screen on the ST is 32K big, 4 times larger than the normal 8-bit display" makes little sense to me. What do the topics "drive speed" and "graphics screen" have to do with each other? The reason the ST's display needs more RAM is because its low-resolution screen is equivalent to the 8-bits HIGH-resolution, except that you get 16 colors instead of 2! Also, the 8-bit uses a character-mapped display in its text mode, with is easier to work with than a bit-mapped display like the ST's, but doesn't allow you to casually mix graphics with the text or do fancy things like multiple

character sets, italics, boldface, or a slew of other features. Sure, with display-list interrupts you can mix screen modes vertically on an 8-bit, or by using graphics 8 mode you can bit-map your own custom character sets, but neither of those alternatives is as good as what the ST does. Besides, it takes almost the same amount of time to load in a *Micro-Illustrator* picture from disk on an 8-bit as a *NeoChrome* picture from disk on an ST, so what's the big deal? (Actually, the ST was about a half-second quicker, but who's counting?) By the way, the ST also has custom graphics chips, something that Amiga proponents forget to mention, too.

I'd like to quote Dave's last column verbatim: "Finally, look at the poor Joe who rushed out and bought one of the very first STs produced. Quite a bargain. First, he probably had to go out and buy a color monitor since he found 90% of the software wouldn't run on his monochrome. \$\$\$ Next, he had to go back and get the ROM chips installed since no software would run with TOS in RAM. \$\$\$ Next came the memory upgrade to 1 Meg. since all the powerful application programs he bought a 520 for would not run in so little memory. \$\$\$ Next back for a second disk drive since backing up a disk with one drive is like loading a C-64 disk program. \$\$\$ OOOPPS! Better go back with that single-sided drive and get the double-sided one since a lot of software won't run on the single-sided drives. \$\$\$ There he sits, happy at last, ready to run down to the store again and get the blitter chip since none of the software a year from now will probably work without it. \$\$\$ OUCH! Power Without the Price! I'll tell you what guys, I'm going to continue using my very productive 8-bit computer and you let me know when you get those STs finished, OK?"

Some notes on the above points:

If you mean, "most GAMES won't run on the monochrome system," you're probably right. For applications such as desktop publishing and Computer-Aided Design the monochrome is advised because of the higher resolution.

2) Early ST owners knew they were paying a higher price than normal when the ST was first introduced, and knew they needed to upgrade with TOS ROMS, etc. They wanted to be among the first to have STs, for various reasons, and didn't mind paying the extra money. Consider also that an original Atari 800 without any peripherals cost more than a complete 520 ST SYSTEM does now.

3) I would venture to say that the level of software compatibility between TOS in RAM and TOS in ROM was greater than with the 800 OS and the XL/XE OS. How many people had to buy translator disks?

4) Most software I know of likes to have 1 meg but will run in 512K. How much does it cost to upgrade an XE to 1 meg, for comparison? (I really don't know the answer but am curious.)

5) I have had my single-disk ST system for well over a year now and have not experienced anything that I would consider more than a minor inconvenience because of having one drive. I know of several PD programs that allow me to back up my disks just fine, thank you.

6) While I agree that single-sided drives should not have been made for the ST, the effect on commercial software has been about the same as having single-density drives

for the 8-bit; i.e. none to speak of. In fact, one of my biggest complaints is having to swap disks because so much software comes on multiple single-sided disks instead of one double-sided disk!

7) Why did Atari put special calls in TOS to check for a blitter chip if all software is going to assume you have one? GEM has been written to make the presence of the blitter transparent, and the reason Atari put those calls in TOS is so you can turn the blitter OFF if you have to, for example if your program runs too quickly with it on.

8) With the attitude towards the STs you've shown, Dave, I have no doubts what computer you're going to use for some time to come. That's fine for you, but don't mock me for using a computer I enjoy. For example, sitting here with almost a complete issue of the newsletter in memory, ST Writer (the port of AtariWriter from the 8-bit) shows me I have 825000 bytes free. How many chain files would you have to create in *PaperClip* or *AtariWriter* to get the same amount? How many disks would it take? Why, if I decided to spend the money on it, I could buy a desktop-publishing package that would let me see as I went along how the final output would look. It would even be able to drive a laser printer, and give an output resolution greater than the screen's! How many hours does it take to sort a *SynFile* database?

I could go on, but I think my point's been made. I have not tried to offend 8-bit Atari owners, as I am one of them. However, I cannot sit back and let the ST be maligned in a misinformed way. I will give Dave Arlington any opportunity he desires to rebuke the statements I have made in this column, and I sincerely hope he takes me up on it.

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TREASURER'S REPORT

By Reid Hoadley, ACORN Treasurer

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| INCOME | EXPENSE | RUNNING TOTAL | COMMENTS |
|-------------------|----------|------------------|------------------------------|
| ***** | | \$2090.70 | BEGINNING BALANCE |
| \$ 34.00 | | | \$2124.75CURRENT NOTES PMTS |
| \$115.00 | | | NEWSLETTER ADS |
| \$139.00 | | \$2239.75 | DISK COPIES 8 BIT |
| \$ 36.75 | | \$2378.75 | \$2415.50'87 MEMBERSHIP DUES |
| \$ 18.00 | | | \$2433.50'88 MEMBERSHIP DUES |
| \$ 28.75 | | | \$2462.25CONTRIBUTIONS |
| \$272.81 | | \$2189.44 | NEWSLETTER PRINTING |
| \$102.00 | | \$2087.44 | CURRENT NOTES SUBSCR |
| \$ 53.00 | | \$2034.44 | POST OFFICE BOX RENT |
| \$ 63.90 | | \$1970.54 | NEWSLETTER POSTAGE |
| \$ 32.10 | | \$1938.44 | SYNFILE+ SOFTWARE |
| \$ 62.36 | | \$1876.08 | DISKS 8 BIT LIBRARY |
| \$ 65.77 | | \$1810.31 | STAPLER & BUS. CARDS |
| ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| \$371.50 | \$651.94 | \$1810.31 | |
| ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| TOTAL | | \$1810.31 | |
| CASH ON HAND | | \$ 3.25 | |
| CHECKS ON HAND | | \$ 24.75 | |
| ST FUND | | \$ 46.93 | |
| CHECKBOOK BALANCE | | \$1735.38 | |
| EQUIPMENT FUND | | \$ 500.00 | |

MODIFYING THE CX22 TRAKBALL FOR THE ST

By Blake Arnold

The following instructions explain how to modify an Atari trackball (model number CX22) to work like a mouse for the Atari ST (complete with left and right buttons).

To start with, if the instructions here are followed PROPERLY (and you don't fry a chip) it should work just fine, however, I make no claims as to the accuracy of this file, nor do I guarantee that this will work for you.

NOTE: This modification will NOT retain the original "trackball" or "joystick" modes of the ball.

WARNING: The following ONLY applies to the model CX22 trackball! The CX22 can usually be identified by its case (the case matches the 800XL series computer) which is dark brown on top with a white bottom. When in doubt, flip it over and look for a model number!

Things you'll need:

- * An Atari trackball, model CX22
- 1 A Radio Shack joystick extension cable (part # 276-1978)
- 2 A low-wattage soldering iron (15 watt, or close to that)
- 3 A Volt-Ohm meter (you'll need to trace some wires)
- 4 About 2 feet of wire (small gauge will be easier to work with, such as the wire in the joystick cable)

Before we get into this, if you're not familiar with electronics or soldering to IC's, PLEASE have someone else do this for you. Also, DON'T trust the colors on the wires in the Radio Shack joystick extension cord! Every one that I buy is different (Radio Shack seems to use a random color coding... makes it tough on us guys), so you'll need to trace the wires to see what pin on the plug they go too (that's what the ohmmeter is for).

To open up the trackball, remove the 4 screws on the bottom of its "wings"; it still won't come apart after that because there are 2 friction-fit posts inside it (both near the center of the case, one at the top and the other at the bottom), pry it apart slowly and gently to avoid breaking them. Once you open up the trackball, remove the old joystick cable (it doesn't have all the wires we need). Now get your Radio Shack joystick cable and clip off the MALE end and discard it (the end with the metal pins sticking out).

In case you don't aren't familiar with the the pin numbers of the joystick cable (the Radio Shack cable doesn't have them numbered, either), here's the layout looking at the JOYSTICK end of the cable (female end):

```

5   4   3   2   1
 9   8   7   6

```

Strip about 6 inches of the outer jacket off to expose the individual wires (you'll need a little length to work with). The only pin we won't be using is pin 5, so trace it first, and clip off it's wire (now it's out of the way for good!). Next trace all the remaining wires to their plug pin numbers and write it down someplace.

Look at the IC's in the trackball. Find the one marked LM339 (it's a 14-pin IC sitting away from the other IC's, directly south of where the ball sits).

The IC's pins are numbered as follows (standard IC numbering):

```

(looking at the top of the IC)
      14 13 12 11 10 9 8
notch --> )
      1  2  3  4  5  6  7

```

Make the following connections to it:

(Plug pin # to LM339 pin #)

1 - 2 2 - 1 3 - 14 4 - 13

Connect the following wires to the connector that the original joystick cable was plugged into (look on the PC board, the connector's pin 1 is numbered).

(plug pin # to PC board connector pin #)

8 (ground) - pin 1 (closest to center of the case)

7 (+5 v) - pin 2 (to the left of pin 1)

Jump a lead from one connector of each fire-button pad (right and left pads) to pin 1 on the PC board connector (in other words, ground them).

Make the following connections to the other side of the fire-button pads (we're going to separate the right and left buttons).

(plug pin # to --- pad)

6 - left fire pad

9 - right fire pad

Now hook it up to the ST to make sure it works properly. Before you close it up I recommend that you strain-relieve the cord. The easiest way to do this is to tie a knot in the cord where it exits the case (this will keep it from being accidentally pulled out of the trackball). Close it up and you're done.

THE ST SIG

By Tom Bellucco

Brrrrr! Who ordered this stuff? One of the few things I joy about the cold weather is that more people find time to use their computers. For some reason, the computer world livens up in the cold. So, now that you've got all this extra time, why not sit down and write a nice article or review or opinion for the *Kernel*?

With that said, let's move on. November's ST SIG told us a few things:

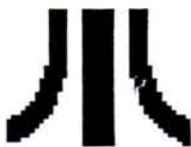
Atari will send you a brand new 1040ST if you send them your 1040ST plus \$125. Last month we were not sure of the 1040 exchange cost. 520 exchange is \$95.....A question about surge suppressors was brought up. You want to buy a power strip that actually does suppress surges. Some just give you more outlets or have a reset switch, but don't actually suppress surges. Someone at the meeting told us what to look for but I didn't get it down. If you are out there reading this, please jot it down and give it to myself, Bruce, or Candi so we can let everyone else know.....Inside your mouse are 3 steel rollers. If you see "gunk" building up on them, CLEAN IT OFF! It definitely inhibits the use of the mouse. Those steel rollers should be spotless.....David Holtz gave a quick "review" of Word Perfect. Maybe we'll get a live demo soon (hint!). He said it comes on 6 SS disks and includes a spell checker and thesaurus along with a variety of printer drivers.....ST X-PRESS, an ST magazine, was passed around. Subscription is \$35/year, \$75/yr with disk. Note: It is printed that the programs are copyrighted, but are released into the

public domain for the benefit of the ST community. Bravo!*Best Electronics* carries a wide variety of ST replacement parts and accessories. Located in California, give them a call at 408-243-6950 and ask for a catalog.....I showed off a new program called *Smooth Talker*. It "says" whatever you type in, or can read you ASCII text files. This means you can use it to "prooftalk" your word processing files. It did not look that useful, but then again, I just opened it that night. If I get it to do some amazing things, I'll bring it back.

Rick Frisicano gave us a 30 minute demo of *PHA\$AR* (*Professional Home Accounting System And Register*). This is a very impressive financial package! It is described as a friendly, GEM based, single-entry accounting system that will make your life easier. The ad for *PHA\$AR* contains a long list of it's features, too long to go into here. Most of us get *Antic* or *STart*, so look in *The Catalog* for the full-page ad, as it is sold by *Antic*. Thanks, Rick for the fine demo.

Some other tidbits that weren't brought up or are new news:

GFA Basic 3.0 is due out in the 1st quarter of 1988. I assume it's the last part of the 1st quarter. *GFA Compiler 3.0* is due out in the Summer of 1988. The new Basic will have a wide variety of new features, including the CASE statement and 1-byte variables. The Compiler will be able to create desk accessories. GFA, in my opinion, is fast becoming the most complete and most used language for the ST. I've written programs in GFA in half (or more) of the time it takes to write in Pascal.....*GENie* (and all other pay services, I assume) will begin the \$5 FCC surcharge on Jan 1, 1988. Better grab all you can now!



Tom Bellucco
"Your Software Connection"
(716) 458-8368



Blank Disks

Fuji 3 1/2" SS/DD 20 pak w/free case \$25.00
Name brand* 3 1/2" SS/DD \$13.00
Maxel 5 1/4" SS/DD \$ 8.00
*Fuji/Maxel/Sony/3M/etc.

ST Software

Marble Madness \$30.00
Paperboy \$39.00
Test Drive \$31.00
Chopper X \$call
Deja Vu \$call
many other new titles! \$call

ST Public Domain Software

The Apex Archives consists of 37 DS disks of PD software for the ST. All software is ARC'd to fit the most on a disk. Disks of software for members are \$2.50 each! To get a copy of the list of files on disk, call and reserve one, then bring \$1 to the next ACORN meeting.

For other info write to:

The Apex Archives
52 Hamlin Street
Rochester, NY 14615-3112

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

JUST IN TIME (???) FOR CHRISTMAS A REVIEW OF TWO GAME SYSTEMS

By Tom Bellucco

It's been a long time since I played a video game on anything other than my ST. I guess I've been a little spoiled with the great graphics. My last experience with a game system was the good ol' Atari 2600, and well, you know...

Seeing all the new advancements in graphics, sound and accessories (especially the light gun), I decided to pick up a game system. Besides, my ST was never meant to be a 'game machine.' :-)

My first choice was the *Nintendo Entertainment System* (NES from now on). The graphics and game variety looked great, but I did not like the look of the joystick controllers. Next, I thought about the *Sega*. The graphics and sound are fantastic, but there aren't as many games available and the prices of the available games are a bit high. So I figured on the *Atari XE Game System* (XEGS). It has a light gun and even comes with a keyboard to turn it into a real 65XE computer!

I went to the 2 closest toy stores to price shop. Both places had all 3 systems (NES, XEGS, and Sega). The XEGS was \$149.95 at both places. Even though both stores touted the Sega and NES, I went with the XEGS. Along with the system, I bought *Lode Runner* on cartridge, the ONLY game either store had for the XEGS. I figured more would be out soon enough, and clerks at the stores said the same. Even the back of the box showed games like *One On One*, *Karateka*, *World/Winter Games*, and other great games. I could wait.

I got the XEGS home and immediately set it up. It came with *Missile Command* built into the system, and *Bug Hunt* and *Flight Simulator* on cartridge. Since I'm a light gun fan, I popped in *Bug Hunt*. What a disappointment! I'd never seen nor heard of it before, so I did not know what to expect. I was hoping it had some objects flying around the screen that I was supposed to blast. Not even close. It has 6 big squares on the screen. Bugs appear in each square, and you have to shoot them before they disappear. The object of the game is to hit on a high percentage of your shots to move onto the next level. The colors stink, period. The action is bad, too. I mean, for a guy who likes to blast away, I had to be careful with my shots! Phooey! Ok, I said. I'll get to like it eventually. Next, I looked at the 3 or 4 manuals that come with *Flight Simulator* (FS). I have never played a single minute of FS in the 5 years I have owned a computer. It just never appealed to me, and it still does not now. I tossed that aside and reset the machine to play *Missile Command*. This was one of my all-time 2600 favorites. The added features and challenge of the 8-bit / XEGS version made it even more fun to play. But the graphics are not there. In fact, they aren't even close to present day standards. Blocky graphics just don't cut it anymore. Finally, there are only 2 options! One game that gives you free cities at every 10000 pts, and one game that doesn't! If you count 1/2 player games as options, then there are 4. Yippie. I played a couple games then yearned for more. What next? Well, there was *Lode Runner* sitting in its box. This was

another game I've never played. Ah, what the hell, plug it in. I was impressed at first. The game was definitely a challenge. But it was not good enough to keep me entertained for a long period of time, and this XEGS would not last long with these types of games.

I suffered for a week, playing *Missile Command* and *Lode Runner*. I gave up on *Bug Hunt* and never even touched *Flight Simulator*. I took a trip back to the toy stores just to see if any new carts had come out for the XEGS. It's getting close to Christmas, so something HAS to come out, right? Wrong. When I asked for new XEGS games, I was told that there WERE new games available. They were *Pac Man*, *Joust*, *Ms. Pac Man*, *Qix*, *Asteroids*, *Robotron*, etc. Sound familiar? Yup, to me too! I asked to see these games, and was handed a bunch of gray boxes with white pin stripes. I've seen these somewhere before! These were all the games released for the 8-bit computers, in the same boxes, with one difference. A sticker that said "Also plays on the new XE Game System!" I saw red. They were trying to pawn these old games off on me as new games for a new system! I should've known. It was at this moment that I knew I no longer wanted the XEGS. Who knows WHEN the advertised games were going to come out? I didn't want to wait, that's for sure.

A few days later, I returned the XEGS and bought the NES. It was a tough choice between the NES and the Sega, but that's a different story. I am now complete satisfied and totally happy I returned the XEGS. Let's talk price first. The XEGS (with 3 games included) + one game cost me \$183. The NES control deck (with *Super Mario Brothers* included) and light gun cost \$125 and I picked up 6 games for \$130. At first glance, the XEGS seems like the better value. It may be, but definitely end up happier with the NES. I know I am! The prices for games look about equal, but it's hard to judge because there aren't any out for the XEGS yet. The graphics on the NES are fantastic! Arcade games look exactly like arcade games! It's come a long way from block graphics. There are about 50 (maybe more!) games available for the NES, and just about all of them are NEW games that I've never played and will be a challenge! Even if all the games advertised for the XEGS are released, the NES will have more available. The Nintendo light gun is twice as good as the Atari light gun. Better quality, higher price. Makes sense. The joystick controllers, which I thought were a major drawback, aren't that bad after all! I'd never used them and was assuming they were bad. They really are not. They fit right in my hand and are very easy to use. All it takes to move the cursor is your thumb. Game start and select buttons are right on the controller, and in every game I have, the start button is used to pause/resume the game. The game reset switch, however, is on the console. That is about the only con against a very long list of pros. The cords on the joysticks and light gun are about 6' long too! No more sitting right in front of the TV screen.

Well, as you can probably tell, I am very pleased and satisfied with the NES. I was dumb enough to shop with my heart instead of with my head the first time around. I bought Atari because of loyalty. I was lucky, though, and got the chance to redeem myself. Don't make the same mistake. Shop with your head and get the better machine, The Nintendo Entertainment System.

1987 ACORN SURVEY

I would like each one of you to stop and take a few minutes to fill this survey. It will help us to better understand your needs the meetings and the newsletter. Last year's survey proved be most enlightening in more ways than one and we are taking it very seriously. About one third of the club responded to the survey last year. I would like to see at least one half of you respond this year. The more that respond, the more accurate the survey will be. An analysis of the results will be printed in the Kernel during the first quarter of the year.

Please take your time to fill out the survey completely. Remember, "Garbage in equals garbage out."

Equipment and Software

1. Age: (A)0-18, (B) 19-25, (C) 26-35, (D)36-55, (E)56+ (circle one)
2. Income: (A)Student, (B)<\$20K, (C) \$20-\$35K, (D)\$35-\$55K, (E)\$56K+ (circle one)
3. Occupation: _____
4. Education: _____
5. Do you program? (Y/N): _____
 - Ability: (A)Beginner, (B)Intermediate, (C)Expert (circle one)
 - Languages:
 - 1 _____
 - 2 _____
 - 3 _____
 - What language(s) would you like to learn or become more fluent in?
 - 1 _____
 - 2 _____
 - 3 _____
6. Present Atari home system
 - Computer(s) Model: _____
 - Printer(s) (number): _____
 - Disk Drive (brand & number): _____
 - Monitor? (Y/N): _____
 - Modem (name, baud): _____
 - Other accessories: _____
 - Number of calls/month on modem: _____
 - Business: _____ Pleasure: _____
 - Number of disks in PD library: _____
 - Number of commercial programs: _____
 - Three most frequently used PD programs:
 - 1 _____
 - 2 _____
 - 3 _____
 - Three most frequently used commercial programs:
 - 1 _____
 - 2 _____
 - 3 _____
 - List your home computers in the order in which you purchased them:
 - 1st _____
 - 2nd _____
 - 3rd _____
 - 4th _____
 - Model(s) of non-Atari computer you own (if any): _____
 - Approximate purchase price of hardware at home: _____
7. Computer system used at work? (Y/N): _____
 - If yes, what kind? _____
8. Future purchase plans for home:
 - Atari (ST, Mega ST, 130XE): _____
 - Disk drive(s) (brand & number): _____
 - Hard drive(name, size): _____

- Modem (name, baud): _____
- Printer (name, dot/daisy): _____
- Other equipment purchases: _____
- Next three software purchases:
 - 1 _____
 - 2 _____
 - 3 _____
- Approximate monthly expenditure for software: \$ _____
- Your software source (local store, mail order, ACORN library, BBS, magazines, friend):
 - 1 _____
 - 2 _____
 - 3 _____

Acorn Club And Newsletter

1. Meets my needs (5 high / 1 low) _____
2. How are the SIGS working?
 - 8-BIT SIG? _____
 - Satisfied? (Y/N) _____
 - What improvements would you like?
 - 1 _____
 - 2 _____
 - 3 _____
 - 16-BIT SIG? _____
 - Satisfied? (Y/N) _____
 - What improvements would you like?
 - 1 _____
 - 2 _____
 - 3 _____
 - What other SIGs would you like?
 - 1 _____
 - 2 _____
 - 3 _____
3. How do you like the monthly presentations? (5 high / 1 low) _____
 - What kind of presentations would you like?
 - 1 _____
 - 2 _____
 - 3 _____
 - Will you make a presentation? _____
4. How do you rate the ACORN libraries? (5 high / 1 low) _____
 - A fair price for 8-bit? _____
 - A fair price for 16-bit? _____
6. How do you rate The ACORN KERNEL? (5 high / 1 low) _____
 - What features do you like best?
 - 1 _____
 - 2 _____
 - 3 _____
 - What would you change, improve or add?
 - 1 _____
 - 2 _____
 - 3 _____
 - Will you contribute to the newsletter? _____
7. Three biggest advantages to being an ACORN member:
 - 1 _____
 - 2 _____
 - 3 _____
8. What would you do to improve ACORN?
 - 1 _____
 - 2 _____
 - 3 _____
9. Your comments on anything: (Attach and continue on another sheet of paper)

LIBRARY REQUEST AND MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|--------------------------------|--|--|
| Name _____ | | City, State, Zip _____ | | | | |
| Address _____ | | Phone _____ | | | | |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><u>8-BIT</u></p> <p>Public Domain Disks - \$4.00 each (Includes the disk) _____</p> <p>Total Amt. _____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">DISK NUMBERS</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><u>ST</u></p> <p>Single Sided - \$4.00 _____</p> <p>Double Sided - \$5.50 _____</p> <p>Disk of the Month Subscription - \$35.00/yr _____</p> <p>Partial Subscription \$3.00/mo (4 month minimum) _____</p> <p>ST Library Directory Listing - \$.50 _____</p> <p>Total Amt. _____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">DISK NUMBERS</p> | | | | | |
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